

Afghanistan | Herat Earthquake



Families affected by earthquakes are living under tents or tarpaulins in Herat Province (Photo: Meer Abdullah Rasikh, IFRC)

<p>Emergency appeal №: MDRAF007 Emergency appeal launched: 10/4/2021 Emergency appeal revised: 14/10/2023 (6th revision) Operational Strategy published: 10 /11/2023 (specific for Herat Earthquake Response)</p>	<p>Glide №: EQ-2023-000184-AFG</p>
<p>Operation update #2 Date of issue: 29 February 2024</p>	<p>Timeframe covered by this update: From 7/10/2023 to 31/12/2023</p>
<p>Operation timeframe: 15 months 7/10/2023 - 31/12/2024</p>	<p>Number of people being assisted: 50,000</p>
<p>Funding requirements (CHF): 9 million through the IFRC Emergency Appeal 20 million Federation-wide</p>	<p>DREF amount initially allocated: CHF 750,000 (loan to Emergency Appeal)</p>

Sixth revision of Emergency Appeal MDRAF007 seeks CHF 120 million overall and is currently **40 per cent funded**. The funding requirement for Herat earthquakes Operational Strategy is CHF 9 million, of which contributions amounting to CHF 3 million had been recorded as of 31 December 2023. Further funding contributions are needed to enable the Afghan Red Crescent Society, with the support of the IFRC, to continue with humanitarian assistance to people affected by earthquakes in Herat province.

A. SITUATION ANALYSIS

Description of the crisis

On 7 October 2023, a magnitude 6.3 earthquake, accompanied by several aftershocks, hit western Afghanistan. The epicentre of the earthquake was in the Zinda Jan district, approximately 40 km northwest of Herat City. The impact was particularly severe in Herat, although the earthquake was strongly felt across four provinces: Badghis, Farah, Ghor, and Herat.

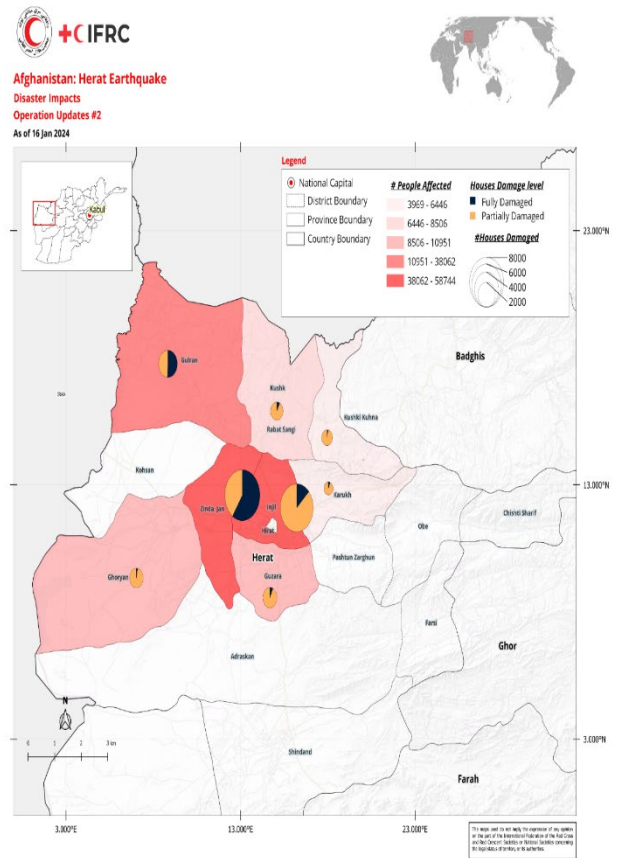
The Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA) reported that the earthquakes mostly impacted 382 villages of 10 districts (Ghoryan, Gulran, Guzara, Herat, injil, Karukh, Kohsan, Kushki Kohna, Robot Sangi and Zinda Jan). Official data in October 2023 by the local authorities indicated that over 2,000 people were killed and over 9,000 were injured.

The affected communities experienced significant devastation, including the loss of homes, livestock, agricultural lands, and sources of livelihood. Immediate humanitarian assistance is needed to help rebuild lives, revive farms, acquire business and socio-economic skills, and gradually recover from the tragic consequences of the calamity.

Among the first responders were volunteers and staff from the Herat branch of the Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS). They were augmented by teams from neighbouring provinces, with 32 response teams deployed in the affected areas thus far. Supported by Red Cross and Red Crescent (RCRC) movement and non-movement partners, ARCS dispatched prepositioned emergency stocks and carried out lifesaving activities, including search and rescue, offered emergency first aid, distributed ready-to-eat food and water, provided emergency shelter and household items, and transported injured people to the hospital. ARCS also provided food parcels, dignity kits, and winterization kits.

Furthermore, ARCS has reoriented its approach to focus on various sectors, prioritizing basic needs, livelihoods, health, shelter, and WASH (water, sanitation, and hygiene). This strategy incorporates community engagement and accountability (CEA), disaster risk reduction (DRR), national society development (NSD), and protection gender and inclusion (PGI) aspects. Cash and voucher assistance (CVA) will be the preferred modality for delivering assistance. Recovery interventions will be initiated alongside relief efforts, and the preparedness for effective response (PER) approach has been adopted from the outset of the operation.

Following the earthquakes of 7 October 2023, the IFRC Secretariat dispatched emergency shelter and household items, allocated **CHF 750,000** from the IFRC Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) to support the ARCS immediate response. Additionally, the [Emergency Appeal MDRAF007](#) was relaunched to incorporate immediate and recovery needs arising from the earthquakes. The latest revision of the Emergency Appeal includes a funding requirement of CHF 9 million for the Herat earthquake response. This response is among several others supported by the IFRC in the context of multiple humanitarian crises affecting Afghanistan. As of 2024, two operational strategies are in effect as part of the Appeal:



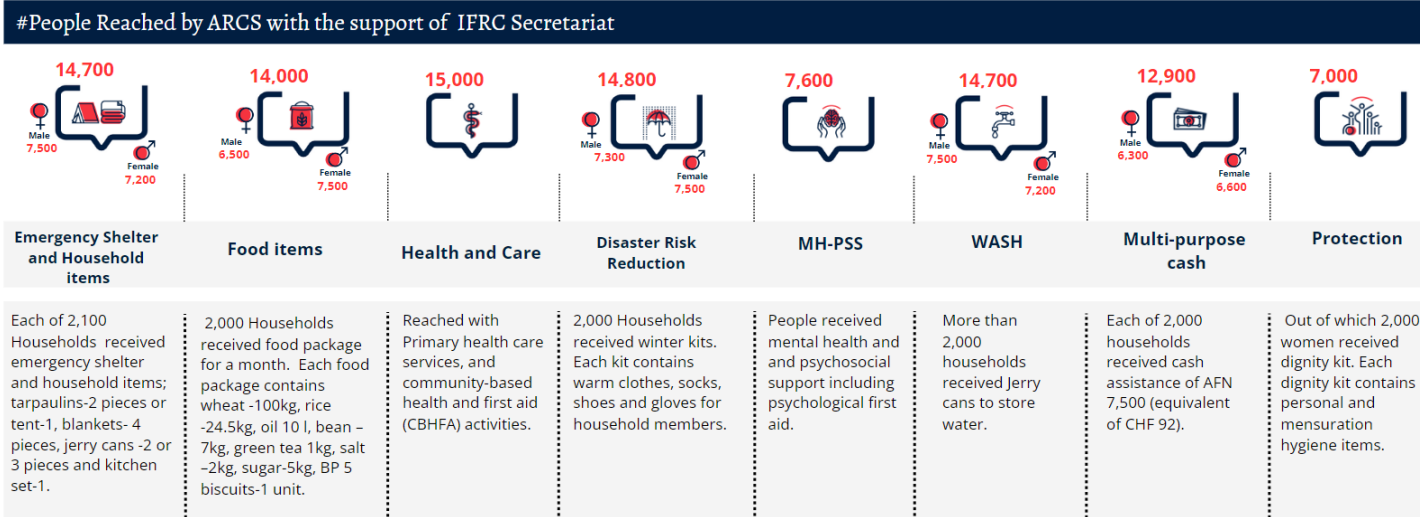
- Operational strategy for the wide humanitarian crisis ([Protracted Humanitarian Crisis](#))– timeframe ends on 31 December 2024.
- Operational strategy for [Herat earthquakes](#) – timeframe ends on 31 December 2024.

On 3 October 2023, Pakistan authorities mandated the voluntary departure of all undocumented migrants by 1 November 2023. Since 15 September 2023, the daily average of individuals returning to Afghanistan from Pakistan has surged to 4,500 through the Spin Boldak (Kandahar) and Tork ham (Nangarhar) crossing points, compared to an average of 260 individuals per day in the first half of 2023. As of 6 January 2024, 495,073 Afghans have already returned¹. Projections by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) anticipate that around 720,000 undocumented individuals and 50,000 individuals without Proof of Registration cards may return from Pakistan by July 2024. In response, the IFRC has allocated CHF 750,000 from its IFRC-DREF ([MDRAF013](#)) to support ARCS in conducting a multi-sectoral response, such as establishing humanitarian service points and providing primary health and care, including vaccination, drinking water, temporary latrines and carry out risk communication and community engagement and accountability activities for 50,000 people at Torkham and Spin Boldak-Chaman borders.

Summary of response

Overview of the host National Society and ongoing response

ARCS maintains a presence in all provinces of Afghanistan, including Herat, where it operates a regional office for the West and a branch office specifically for Herat. In its auxiliary capacity, the National Society sits in a committee established by the authorities and chaired by the local governor to coordinate the overall response.



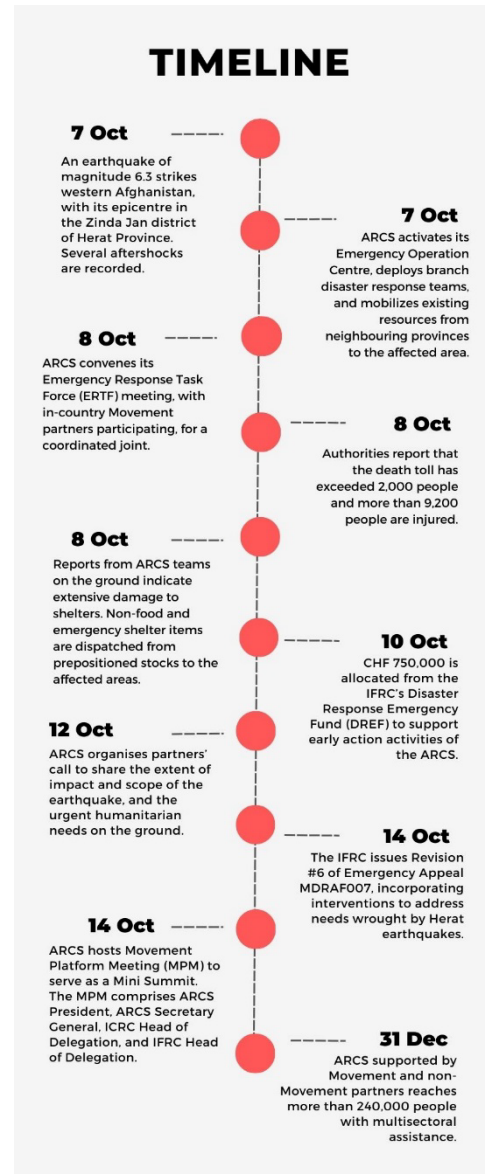
The ongoing operation is targeting 50,000 people with multisectoral assistance such as food, cash, shelter, health and care, livelihoods, winterization, and National Society response capacity enhancement components. This second Operation Update (OU#2) covers the period 7 October to 31 December 2023. During this reporting period, ARCS delivered integrated assistance to **7,000 households**, benefiting an estimated **49,000 people**. This aid was made possible through the resources mobilized via the IFRC Emergency Appeal. More details:

¹ [UNHCR-IOM Flash Update #13](#)

- 2,100 households (14,700 people; 7,500 males and 7,200 females) received emergency shelter and household items. Each household received tarpaulins-2 pieces or tent-1, blankets- 4 pieces, jerry cans -2 pieces and kitchen set-1.
- 2,000 households (12,872 people; 6,279 males and 6,593 females) received cash assistance of AFN 7,500 (equivalent of CHF 92) each.
- 7,588 people (3,639 males and 3,949 females) provided with mental health and psychosocial (MH-PSS) and psychological first aid (PFA) services.
- 4,574 people reached through community-based health and first aid (CBHFA) activities such as household visit and disseminating health and hygiene messages.
- 2,000 households (14,774 people; 7,482 males and 7,492 females) provided with winter clothes.
- 2,000 households (13,994 people; 6,491 males and 7,503 females) received food package for a month. The food assistance was supported by Turkish Red Crescent (TRC) utilizing resources mobilized via the IFRC Emergency Appeal. Each food package contains wheat -50kg, rice -10kg, oil 5 l, bean -5kg, green tea 500 gm, sugar -2kg, pasta-2 kg, tomato paste-800 gm, and 500 gm biscuits.
- 2,000 women from 2,000 households received dignity kits.
- Part of the IFRC Emergency Appeal, five mobile health teams (MHTs) are operational in the Herat province in 2024.
- Multi-hazard contingency plan development process is in progress.

The planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting (PMER) department of ARCS conducted an exit survey during the distribution of cash and in-kind assistance. This survey aimed to gather feedback from the target population and identify areas for improvement in ongoing and future distributions. Likewise, ARCS carried out post-distribution monitoring (PDM) to assess the utilization of relief items and cash, and the recipients' perceptions on the distribution process. Key findings of the PDM are presented under respective strategic sectors.

Federation wide response



Federation wide response (#people Reached)

Household items 70,600	Food items 240,000	Health 17,000	MH-PSS 11,200	WASH 23,000	Multi-purpose cash 15,700
Provided tents, tarpaulins, blankets kitchen sets, winterization kits	provided food parcels and/or assorted food items	Provided with primary health and care services	Provided with psychological first aid services.	Provided drinking water, water storage containers and hygiene items.	Provided cash to 2,410 households

Apart from the aid facilitated through the resources mobilized via the IFRC Emergency Appeal, Movement partners have contributed to the ARCS response. As of 31 December 2023, ARCS had provided humanitarian assistance to more than **240,000 people** from **34,000 households**, offering a range of services with the backing of IFRC networks.



ARCS delivered health services to those affected by the earthquake through 13 mobile health teams and three fixed health facilities at the onset of the operation. As part of the Emergency Appeal, the IFRC Secretariat is currently supporting ARCS in mobilizing an additional five MHTs in 2024. **(Photo: Meer Abdullah Rasikh, IFRC)**

Since the start of the operation, ARCS has actively engaged the IFRC network in various activities, such as assessments, search and rescue, search and retrieval, rubbles clearance, emergency first aid and distribution of cash and relief items. ARCS managed injuries and offered health services through 16 health facilities comprising 13 MHTs and three static clinics, as well as transported injured people to hospitals after first aid, mainly during the initial two months of operation in 2023. The health facilities received support from the Danish Red Cross (DRC), Norwegian Red Cross (NorCross) and the IFRC Secretariat. Since December 2023, the ARCS has operated five new emergency MHTs with support of the IFRC Secretariat and NorCross through the IFRC Emergency Appeal fund.

As of 31 January 2024, the MHTs served 5,370 people, including 1,494 males, 2,532 females, 706 boys under 5, and 638 girls under 5. The MHTs conducted malnutrition screenings, identifying 47 cases out of 466 examinations. For moderate cases (41 cases), medical prescriptions and recommendations were provided, while six children (5 girls and 1 boy) diagnosed with severe malnutrition, and all under the age of five, were referred to the nearest district hospital or the closest higher level health facility equipped to provide treatment for severe cases. Currently lacking an appropriate referral and feedback system, the MHTs will ensure follow-up by revisiting the patients in their villages to collect necessary information.



ARCS medical staff (female) providing service to female and children in Herat province. **(Photo: NorCross)**

Additionally, 181 children and eight pregnant women received age-appropriate vaccinations. In particular, all children received vaccinations against polio as part of the routine immunization, reinforcing commitment to eradicating this disease. Health education sessions reached 9,350 people, with 7,850 in groups and 1,492 individuals, covering topics

such as immunization, breastfeeding, nutrition, family planning, hygiene, and sanitation.

DRC supported ARCS in training and mobilizing 31 volunteers (18 females, 13 males) to assess the mental health and psychosocial needs of affected households. These volunteers provided psychological first aid and outreach support to 7,588 people. They were deployed in earthquake-affected districts, villages, and open areas within Herat city, where people sought shelter due to fear from the earthquake and aftershocks. Likewise, DRCS supported ARCS to provide winterization assistance to 500 households in Herat.

Similarly, Qatar Red Crescent Society (QRCS) supported ARCS with food and household items to distribute to the people affected by the earthquake. The Red Crescent Society of the Islamic Republic of Iran supported in search and rescue, food, and household items (refer to [Herat Earthquake Response Situation Report # 2](#) for more details).

Furthermore, TRCS supported ARCS in assessments and provided food packages to 2,000 households through funds mobilized by IFRC Emergency Appeal. Additionally, ARCS, with TRCS support, offered winter heating assistance to 700 households and distributed 500 four-season tents to those affected by the earthquake. These durable shelters provide crucial protection and comfort during harsh winter conditions.

Needs analysis

According to assessments conducted by ARCS with the support of in-country Movement partners, as well as assessments by the wider humanitarian community, the identified needs can be categorized as follows:

- **Immediate needs:** food assistance, winterization assistance, cash assistance to meet emergency needs, emergency shelter, household items, emergency health, MHPSS including psychosocial first aid (PFA), restoring family links (RFL), emergency WASH support, including hygiene, menstrual hygiene management (MHM) kits and addressing protection needs of women, girls and children who have been orphaned and women who have been widowed.
- **Medium-term needs:** support for transitional shelter, restoring livelihoods, provision of clean water and sanitation. Primary health and care and supporting rehabilitation and/or equipment of education and health facilities. Continuous mental health and psychosocial support such as but not limited to PFA, recreational activities for children, and other activities to assist the recovery of the affected population.
- **Long-term needs:** durable shelter, health and WASH facilities and awareness activities, restoring livelihoods and income generating initiatives, improving food security, education, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation activities, and National Society Development (NSD) including preparedness for effective response.

Needs per sector are as follows:

Shelter and Household Items

The earthquake and its aftershocks caused significant damage to structures, with an estimated 48,000 houses damaged or destroyed². Consequently, an equal number of families have been displaced, while those remaining families attempt to take shelter in their moderately damaged houses. Currently, households are living in tents/tarpaulins or makeshift shelters, which lack adequate protection from the harsh elements, particularly winter conditions. It is essential to provide more sustainable and durable shelter solutions to protect the households from the annual cold weather challenges in Afghanistan.

² <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/afghanistan/afghanistan-herat-earthquake-response-situation-report-no-2-2-november-2023>

In the fourth week of November 2023, the ARCS team together with IFRC shelter delegate conducted a field visit to Injil and Zinda Jan districts to gain a comprehensive understanding of the ground situation. The team assessed local resources, encompassing materials such as soil, stone, sand, and timber water, and skilled labor, to guide the reconstruction strategy for an impactful humanitarian response. Furthermore, the team held a meeting with the shelter cluster, local authorities and communities in Herat. During the visit, widespread destruction of shelters in villages was observed, emphasizing the urgent need for shelter assistance. In addition to shelter, households need various household items to meet their basic daily living requirements, including bedding and blankets, cooking utensils, water storage containers, lighting and energy sources, clothing, and footwear.

The cold desert climate of Herat requires special attention to be given to heat management and insulation in shelter designs. Adequate insulation, heating solutions, and protection from wind and moisture should be incorporated into the shelter interventions to ensure the well-being of the affected families during the winter months. Furthermore, ARCS and IFRC shelter engineers carried out damage assessment of seven villages of Zinda Jan district, Herat province to select villages for shelter construction. The IFRC Emergency Appeal targets to support construction of 500 shelters, however, currently funding is available for 300 shelters only.



A team of ARCS and IFRC shelter engineers conducting shelter assessments in seven villages of Zinda Jan district. (Photo: IFRC)

Health and WASH

The earthquake in Herat province has created a critical need for health services and support. Approximately 275,000 people, including 60 per cent children³, require urgent healthcare assistance. This includes basic health services, referrals for severe cases, and the provision of medicines, supplies, and equipment. Trauma care, physical rehabilitation, and mental health support are crucial. Winter conditions have increased the vulnerability of those living in tents, especially children, women, the elderly, and those with pre-existing health conditions. In November 2023, a total of 2,901 cases of acute respiratory infection (ARI) and 316 acute watery diarrhea (AWD) cases were reported among the earthquake-affected population⁴. The demand for aid continues to rise due to the challenges posed by harsh winter conditions.

³ Afghanistan: Earthquakes in Herat Province Health Situation Report No. 12 November 2023, WHO

⁴ Afghanistan: Earthquakes in Herat Province Health Situation Report No. 12 November 2023, WHO

Moreover, the earthquake has significantly impacted the mental health of the population, leading to increased anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Displacement and disrupted social networks have exacerbated feelings of isolation and distress. Urgent comprehensive assessments and psychosocial support programs are needed to address these challenges. Group counselling, community activities, and support groups are essential for promoting emotional well-being and rebuilding lives.

In the WASH sector, damaged water facilities and latrines need repair to serve approximately 330,000 people. Inadequate water and sanitation pose an increased risk of communicable disease outbreaks, necessitating preventive measures.

Food Security, Cash, and Livelihood

The households in the affected districts were already grappling with severe poverty, unemployment, and food insecurity exacerbated by prolonged drought and economic challenges. The earthquake exacerbated these issues, leading to the loss of food stocks for many households and livestock for herder families. To address their immediate needs and rebuild their livelihoods, households require cash assistance for essential necessities and resources to reestablish their means of income. Assessments suggest that nearby urban markets are operational, facilitating the distribution of aid and procurement of necessary supplies. ARCS provided multipurpose cash and food to the households affected by the earthquake.

PGI and CEA



ARCS mobilized female staff and volunteers to assess needs of women and children in the earthquake affected area (Photo: IFRC)

Five key informant interviews (KIIs) and one focus group discussion (FGD) were conducted with males registered for multipurpose cash, while three focus group discussions were held with females who received dignity and winterization kits in Herat Marastoon to assess their needs in November 2023. Likewise, field visits were carried out to assess the needs of women and children. The major needs identified included adequate shelter for all household members, livestock, and food storage, as well as psychosocial support. Women were disproportionately affected by the earthquakes and required targeted assistance. Lack of awareness activities focusing on ARCS services for women and female humanitarian workers at distribution points had limited women's access to information and services. The lack of functioning WASH facilities raises concerns for protection and health, and efforts should be made to register and assist women whose husbands are working abroad.

Because of inadequate systematic feedback mechanisms, questions and concerns may go unanswered. Such a scenario can increase misinformation and deprive communities of potentially lifesaving and life-improving information. It will be crucial to establish a systematic feedback mechanism using multiple channels (minimum two) to ensure that questions from community members can be answered promptly and that information and engagement with communities

can be tailored according to their needs. The communication channels to communities in affected villages will include face-to-face interactions and utilization of local radio stations. Additionally, the destruction of schools and community-based education facilities has disrupted children's education, making it crucial to provide them with safe spaces to resume their learning. Protection support, especially for vulnerable groups such as women, children, the elderly, and people with disabilities, are paramount in ensuring the well-being and safety of the affected population⁵.

⁵ Afghanistan: Herat Earthquake Response Situation Report No. 2 - As of 2 November 2023 | OCHA (unocha.org)

Education

The earthquake and its aftershocks destroyed at least 21 schools, as well as an estimated 70 community-based education facilities. Immediate needs include setting up tents to create temporary learning spaces and replacing teaching and learning materials, such as textbooks, teaching and learning kits, and recreation kits. In the longer term, the education cluster will reconstruct and rehabilitate more than 20 destroyed schools to ensure children are able to safely access education.

Preparedness and Local Response Capacity

Following the initial earthquake on 7 October 2023, the first responders hailed from the affected communities themselves, comprising community members, local businesses, authorities, ARCS Herat branch staff and volunteers, local civil society organizations, and community-based organizations, among others. While additional assistance from the International Red Cross Red Crescent actors was mobilized shortly after the disaster, its deployment was initially hindered by challenges like the remoteness of affected villages and the absence of cellular or internet connectivity.

The earthquakes underscore the crucial importance of investing in both institutional and community preparedness to ensure an adequate level of readiness for future disasters. Therefore, alongside addressing the immediate, medium-term, and recovery needs of affected communities, it is imperative to allocate a portion of the resources obtained for the operation towards enhancing community preparedness and bolstering local response capacity. This proactive approach will help mitigate the impact of future disasters and enable communities to respond effectively and efficiently in times of crisis.

Operational risk assessment

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
1. Natural hazards such as harsh winter and floods constraining access and distributions at earthquake affected areas.	High	Medium	<p>Districts affected by the earthquake remained accessible in terms of road conditions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepositioning and replenishment of stocks at regional and branch levels are in progress. Distributed multi-purpose cash, winterization items and dignity kits to households in nine cold provinces, including Herat, before the harsh winter.
<p>2. Situations of violence in target provinces/districts that impact on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access Safety of staff and volunteers Supply chain 	Medium	Medium	<p>The IFRC security plans applied to all IFRC staff throughout the operation. To mitigate the risk, ARCS and IFRC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated security plan Positioned security officer in the field to provide advice and support. The security focal person conducted area-specific security risk assessment for any operational area should any IFRC personnel deploy there. Engaged local volunteers and community leaders at all stages of service delivery. Provided security briefing to staff and volunteers travelling to the field. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Travel progress report on dedicated WhatsApp group for various destination No movement on Fridays (days off) unless there is an emergency. No movement during dark hours Provided volunteers and staff with equipment, identification, and visibility items when they visit the field for distribution or other activities. Disseminated the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement. Identified and implemented risk mitigation measures. <p>The IFRC Stay Safe e-learning courses; Stay Safe. 2.0 Global edition Level 1-3 are mandatory and part of staff induction programmes.</p>
3, Major supply chain risks in Afghanistan:	High	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthened supply chain management team and continuously review processes to make improvements. Adopted the PNS support and sourcing process under the agreement between IFRC and PNS, based on need, urgency, and available

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logistics bottleneck and delays in procurement impact programme delivery timelines. Limited supplies in the markets hinder procurement. Delay on international procurement due to the global supply chain disruption. Delay on supply chain mechanisms for medicine supply Restricted banking services affect cashflow, including payment of suppliers. Banking services are not very flexible. Many checks, screening, and verifications must be conducted due to sanction country. Lack of documentation like financial audited report during financial due diligence checking, hence this is not abundant by the local authority. Fraud and/or corruption. 			<p>opportunities. This applies to PNS present in Afghanistan who have undergone the capacity review and risk assessment process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diversified sourcing options, including those from neighboring countries. Global Federation structure is being followed. Prepositioned readiness stocks in strategic locations across the country for timely response. Engaged financial service providers (FSP) licensed by the central bank and screened and used the UN cash bridge. Started payment mechanism locally through the new local bank account. However, FSP is considered as a backup for any emergency financial situation. Undertook regular context analysis to inform adjustments in approaches or implementing modalities, and thus switching between cash assistance or in-kind modalities as needed. Screened all vendors and service providers through compliance unit against UN and Office of Foreign Assets Control of the US Department sanctions list prior to entering contracts. Socialized the IFRC fraud and corruption prevention policy to vendors and service providers. Applied relevant control measures, including having the IFRC Country Delegation as the first-line defense. ARCS has its own internal audit team for prevention and detection of any fraud / corruption. There is a logistics coordination committee in place for assessment of the procurement process.
<p>4. Risks associated with community-based cash and/or in-kind distribution activities</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established proper community engagement and accountability mechanism since the assessment phase. Put in place crowd control mechanisms, including gender-segregated queuing structures outside of the distribution centers. Promoted community feedback mechanisms to ensure community concerns are heard. Placed help desk outside the distribution points to ensure both beneficiaries and nonbeneficiaries have access to required information
<p>5. With restrictions on the movement of women, there may be limitations or challenges in the deployment of female staff from the headquarters for distribution and monitoring in the field.</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustained private diplomacy for the female staff and volunteers to continue operating in the fields and offices. All national female staff traveled with their Mahram. Ensured that all staff are equipped with identification and visibility items. Considered culturally acceptable dressing
<p>6. Transportation (road & air), Kabul to Herat</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitored and updated list of available flights to Herat regularly. Provided staff with refresher session on the essence and requirement of travel standard operating procedure.
<p>7. Fragility of the national banking system affected liquidity and exchange rate</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued to assess and monitor the situation and explored options to ensure adequate liquidity. Secured cash and brought into the country now with the new bank account activation in Afghanistan International Bank. Used FSP as a back-up with cash delivery services when the flow of cash was affected by the bank.
<p>8. Risk of outbreaks such as AWD due to limited access to water, unsafe sanitation practices and disrupted health services.</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>High</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trained volunteers and mobilized them for health promotion services.

B. OPERATIONAL STRATEGY

Update on the strategy

Integrated Assistance

The response strategy to address the needs of the affected communities adopts a comprehensive and coordinated approach. It aims to address the interconnected needs of the population by providing emergency and durable shelter solutions, household items, food, primary healthcare services, WASH support, and livelihood and socio-economic resilience initiatives. Additionally, the intervention focuses on supporting the affected population in coping with winter conditions, while integrating risk reduction measures. The IFRC Emergency Appeal aim to reach 50,000 people with integrated services.

Cash-Based Assistance

The operation has adopted cash-based assistance to address the immediate emergency needs of the affected population and support their livelihoods and shelter needs. ARCS has provided multipurpose cash to 2,000 households affected by the earthquake in the first week of November 2023. This approach empowered individuals and communities to make decisions based on their own priorities, stimulates local markets, and offers cost-effective benefits compared to other aid options.

National Society Development and Localized Action

As part of this operation, IFRC is supporting ARCS in developing its human resource capacity through national/provincial level training to the staff and volunteers and strengthening logistics and warehousing capacity such as the preposition of relief items. Furthermore, IFRC will support ARCS in institutionalizing capacities and establishing a stronger enabling environment, where organisational policies and strategies are reviewed/updated/introduced that eventually govern future response, recovery, and community resilience engagement of ARCS. The branch development framework will further strengthen the branch system process and procedure with volunteer management guidelines for integrated programme delivery.

Protection and Prevention

The operation has streamlined PGI as well as CEA in all activities. Through the initial assessment and household registration, ARCS is using vulnerability criteria such as seniors with responsibility for children, households headed by widows or single mothers with young children, households with chronically ill members, households with a member with a disability and households with pregnant and lactating women for prioritizing assistance in the communities. The operation is reaching different layers of the community such as supporting single-parent households in addressing their livelihood needs.

Safeguarding

The ARCS will assess sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) risks and conduct child safeguarding risk analysis, taking necessary mitigation actions accordingly. Staff and volunteers will receive training on IFRC's PSEA, child safeguarding, anti-harassment, and whistle-blower protection policies. Community members will be consulted to gauge their understanding of safeguarding and their preferences for receiving IFRC/ARCS services safely, without harm, abuse, exploitation, neglect, or discrimination. The community will be sensitized to key safeguarding issues and provided with information on available free services for vulnerable and eligible members. There is also a plan to conduct child safeguarding risk analysis for this operation.


Community Mobilization

Community members will be mobilized in different interventions such as dissemination of safer shelter awareness, environmental sanitation activities, health awareness activities.

Note: please refer to [Herat Earthquake Operational Strategy](#) (page16-20) for more details on the operational strategy.

C. DETAILED OPERATIONAL REPORT

STRATEGIC SECTORS OF INTERVENTION

	Shelter, Housing and Settlements	People reached: 14,700	
		Female > 18: 4,200	Female < 18: 3,000
		Male > 18: 4,300	Male < 18: 3,200

Objective:	<i>Communities in disaster and crisis affected areas restore and strengthen their safety, wellbeing and longer-term recovery through shelter and settlement solutions</i>
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Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	<i># of earthquakes affected people provided with emergency shelter and household items</i>	14,700	14,000
	<i># of households provided with cash/voucher/in-kind and technical assistance for transitional/durable shelter construction that is safe and adequately enables essential household and livelihoods activities to be undertaken with dignity,</i>	Preparation is underway for supporting 300 house construction	500
	<i># of people who attended training/awareness raising sessions on safe shelter.</i>	Will start from end of February 2024	500

Emergency shelter and household items distribution

Following the earthquake, ARCS supported by the IFRC Secretariat reached 2,100 households, comprised of 14,700 people (Male -7,500 and female -7,200) with emergency shelter and household items such as tents or tarpaulins, blankets, jerry cans, kitchen sets and sleeping pads (refer to page 11 of [MDRAF007 Herat EQ Response OU #1](#) for details of the distribution).

PDM of household items

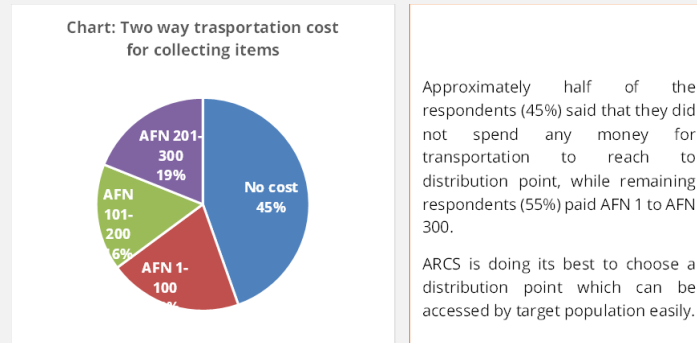
ARCS PMER teams conducted PDM of emergency shelter and household items in Robat Sangi and Zinda Ian districts. A total of 148 people were interviewed, of which 43 per cent were female. The findings of the PDM:

A. Quantity, quality, and usage of items

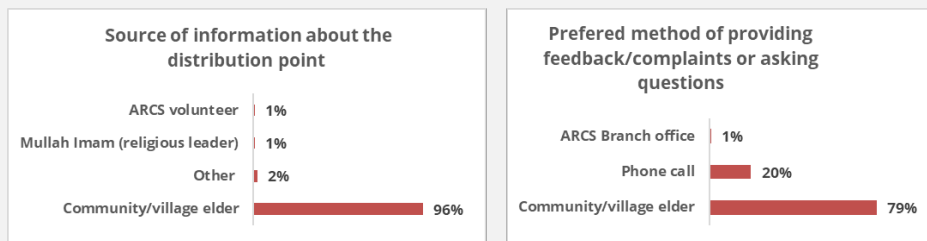
Key questions	Response		What does this mean?
1. Did the assistance meet your main urgent need?	Yes (99%)	No (1%)	ARCS has been successful in meeting the emergency shelter and household items needs of the target households.
2. What did you do with the assistance received?	Used (99%)	Kept/not used (1%)	
3. Was the quantity of the assistance you received adequate in respect of the number of people in your household?	Yes (98%)	No (2%)	
4. How was the quality of items in the assistance package you received?	Excellent-80% Good -14%	Fair -3% Dissatisfactory -3%	Most of the respondents found the quality of items either excellent or good while the remaining 6 per cent said the items were fair of dissatisfactory. According to them, the blanket quality was poor and tents were not workable for winter.

B. Access to assistance

Most of the respondents (96 per cent) said that they knew about the distribution detail from the community/village elders. Likewise, 79 per cent respondents said they would like to contact community/village elders if they have any feedback or comments, or any questions related to the distribution. This means community/village elders can be mobilized for engaging community in future interventions followed by Hotline services.



C. Community engagement and Accountability:



D. Protection:

All respondents said that:

- They did not pay anything to anybody to receive the assistance.
- Location of distribution point convenient for them
- They were treated respectfully by the ARCS staff.

The PDM findings indicate that ARCS assistance effectively addressed the urgent needs of the target households. Respondents confirmed the fulfillment of their main urgent needs, utilized the assistance, and considered the quantity sufficient for their household size. While most respondents rated the item quality as excellent or good, a few expressed dissatisfactions, mainly due to poor quality blankets and non-winter-appropriate tents.

The full PDM dashboard (**food, emergency shelter and household items**) can be accessed here: [link](#)

Mobilization of tractors and human resources

ARCS deployed five tractors from Khost and Paktika to Herat, funded by the Government of Japan, for debris-clearing efforts. The tractors assisted affected households in clearing up debris from collapsed homes, transferring salvaged household items to temporary camps of designated locations, and clearing routes to blocked homesteads. Additionally, three engineers from the National Society, who were part of the shelter technical team supporting the Khost and Paktika earthquake response, joined the multisectoral assessment team in Herat.

Shelter construction

An IFRC shelter delegate together with the ARCS team conducted a field visit to Injil and Zinda Jan districts to gain a comprehensive understanding of the ground situation. The team assessed local resources, encompassing materials, water, and skilled labor, to guide the reconstruction strategy for an impactful humanitarian response. The team conducted meetings with shelter cluster and local government bodies in Herat to foster collaboration among diverse stakeholders, ensuring an efficient and effective humanitarian response. Likewise, shelter engineers assessed the damage in seven villages of Zinda Jan district. With the IFRC Secretariat support, ARCS developed a shelter strategy through collaborative consultations with the Herat province community and various ARCS departments, leveraging their diverse expertise. IFRC/ARCS is supporting the construction of 300 shelters in the affected area.



ARCS supported by IFRC Secretariat distributing household items to the households affected by earthquake in Herat province. (Photo: Meer Abdullah Rasikh, IFRC)

Federation-wide response

Additionally, ARCS distributed 900 tarpaulins, 950 tents, 6,100 blankets, 500 kitchen sets, 1,234 mattress/carpet/beds, 60 quilts and 67 jackets to households in Herat with the bilateral in-kind support from PNS. Details of which are provided below:

Table 1: Shelter and household items supported by PNS

Partners	Tarpaulin (Pcs)	Tent (Pcs)	Blanket (Pcs)	Kitchen set	Mattress/ carpet/bed (Pcs)	Quilt	Jacket
Iranian Red Crescent		500	4,000	500	1,000		
NorCross	500		500				
QRCS	400		1,600				
Red Cross Society of China		450			234	60	67
Total	900	950	6,100	500	1,234	60	67

Furthermore, ARCS distributed emergency shelter and household items received from other different sources. Currently, the distribution data is being validated in ARCS.



Livelihoods

People reached: 13,994

Female > 18:
4,000

Female < 18:
3,503

Male > 18: **4,000**

Male < 18: **2,491**

Objective: *Communities, especially in disaster and crisis affected areas, restore and strengthen their livelihoods*

Key indicators

Indicator

Actual

Target

# of households assisted through emergency food security ⁶	2,000	2,000
# of targeted households reached with livelihood support (livestock, agriculture) essential on-farm and/or off-farm and/or non-farm inputs/materials/tools for production.	0	1000
# of people receiving temporary employment opportunities (cash for work)	0	500
# of people receiving vocational/ soft skill training (disaggregated by types)	0	300
# of households receiving support for income generation activities	0	200
# of households and/or community groups (disaggregated by types) received working capital or inputs for livelihood activities in line with their proposals.	0	200

Food distribution

ARCS provided food assistance for 2,000 households supported by TRC utilizing resources mobilized via the IFRC Emergency Appeal in October 2023. Each food package contains wheat -50kg, rice -10kg, oil 5 l, bean -5kg, green tea 500 gm, sugar -2kg, pasta-2 kg, tomato paste-800 gm, and 500 gm biscuits. Refer to below table for household details of the food distribution.

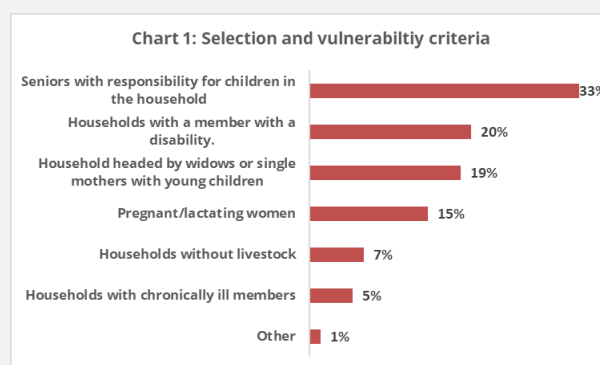
District	# of Villages	# of HH Targeted	# of HH Reached	# of people benefitted		
				Male	Female	Total
Zinda Jan	27	1,754	1,754	5,692	6,580	12,272
Gulran	1	106	106	344	398	742
Injil	1	140	140	455	525	980
Grand Total	29	2,000	2,000	6,491	7,503	13,994

ARCS will implement livelihood activities based on the identified needs and scopes in Herat province. Furthermore, the IFRC is exploring resources for supporting ARCS to implement the livelihood activities.

PDM of food distribution

A total of 150 respondents (45 per cent males; 55 per cent females) were interviewed during the survey. ARCS utilized the following vulnerability criteria when selecting house holds for food assistance:

- Seniors with responsibility for children in the household,
- households with a member with a disability,
- households headed by widows or single mothers with young children,
- Households with pregnant and lactating women.
- Households without livestock



⁶ This indicator has been added.

- Households with chronically ill members

The validity of these criteria was confirmed through post-distribution monitoring, where respondents were asked which vulnerability criteria, they met to receive the food package. Chart 1 presents the respondents' answers. Additionally, 1 per cent of the respondents mentioned other selection criteria, specifically human and financial losses resulting from earthquakes.

Quantity, quality, and usage of items:

Key questions	Response		What does this mean?
• Did the assistance meet your main urgent need?	Yes (99%)	No (<1%)	ARCS has been successful in meeting the target households' food needs for a month during the earthquake's early days.
• What did you do with the assistance you received?	Consumed (100%)		
• Was the quantity of the assistance you received adequate in respective of the number of people in your household?	Yes (98%)	No (2%) Large number of members in households	
• How was the quality of items in the assistance package you received?	Excellent-21% Good -73%	Fair -5% Dissatisfactory - 1%	Most of the respondents found the quality of food items either excellent or good while the remaining 6 per cent said the items were fair or dissatisfactory.

Access to assistance:

- When it was asked about the location of distribution point convenient for respondents, all the respondents said yes.
- Regarding both way transportation cost, 65 percent respondents said that they spent AFN 0-100, followed by 11 percent AFN 201-300, 11 percent AFN 301-400, 11 percent AFN 401-500 and the remaining 1 percent said that they spent AFN 101-200 to receive the food assistance.

Community engagement and accountability:

- 45 percent of respondents said that ARCS staff conducted a sensitization session before distribution, while 55 per cent said 'No'.
- 96 per cent of the respondents said from community/village elder while 4 per cent said Mulam imam, ARCS volunteers, ARCS provincial office and others respectively.
- 41 per cent respondents said that they saw a complaint desk, person, or place available where they could provide feedback/complaints/questions about the distribution, while 59 per cent respondents said 'No'.
- 83 per cent of the respondents said that they preferred to provide their feedback/complaints/questions to community/village elder, 16 per cent respondents said phone call while remaining 1 per cent said complaint desk.

Protection: All respondents indicated that they never paid money or other benefits to somebody to receive the assistance.

The PDM findings overall indicate that, ARCS supported by the IFRC network, has successfully met urgent needs, ensured access to assistance, and maintained accountability in the distribution process, while also highlighting areas for improvement in community engagement and feedback mechanisms.

Federation wide response

Additionally, ARCS reached more than 5,300 households with food items- with the support of other international/national non-government organisations and partners.



Multi-purpose Cash

People reached: **12,872**

Female > 18: **2,994**

Female < 18: **3,599**

Male > 18: **2,798**

Male < 18: **3,481**

Objective:

The most affected communities are able to access and purchase essential food and household items and services in a secure and dignified manner.

Key indicators

Indicator

Actual

Target

of households that receive cash for basic needs

2,000

2,000

ARCS, supported by the IFRC, distributed multipurpose cash through a cash-in-envelope modality to 2,000 households comprising 12,872 people (6,279 males and 6,593 females). Among them, 213 households are women-headed, and 52 households are child-headed. Each household received AFN 7,500 (approx. CHF 92) aligned with the minimum standards set by the Cash and Voucher Working Group (CVWG) and the FSAC Cluster. The distribution, facilitated by financial service provider contracted by the IFRC Secretariat, was concluded on 5 November 2023. Refer to [MDRAF007 Herat EQ Response OU #1](#) page # 14 for details of the distribution and its exit survey findings.

ARCS MPCA transfer value referred to the CVWG guidance (April 2023) for reduced MPCA (less cash for food) transfer value, AFN 7,500. Furthermore, ARCS supported by TRC through the Emergency Appeal fund, distributed food packages to 2,000 households in Herat province, with 1,860 households located in the same districts (Gulran and Zinda Jan).

PDM of multipurpose cash

In December 2023, the ARCS PMER department conducted a PDM of multi-purpose cash assistance to households affected by earthquake in Herat province. A total of 202 respondents (178 males and 24 females) were interviewed during the survey.

Key findings of the survey:

- 91 per cent of respondents said the amount was enough to meet their urgent household needs, while the remaining said it was not enough as they had a large household size, and the food was expensive.

Access to assistance and information:

- 33 per cent respondents said that they waited 15-29 minutes, 34 percent less than 15 minutes and the remaining 34 per cent waited more than 1 hour to receive their cash.
- 97 per cent of respondents said that they spent AFN 0-200, and the remaining 3 per cent said that they spent AFN 201-300 two-way transportation cost to receive the cash.
- 19 per cent of respondents said that ARCS staff conducted a sensitization session before cash distribution, 81 per cent said 'No'.
- 100 per cent felt safe on the day of cash distribution, keeping cash at home, and travelling with cash to the market.
- 98 per cent of the respondents were satisfied with the information provided by the ARCS about the place, time, and package content before distribution, while 2 per cent were neutral and dissatisfied respectively.

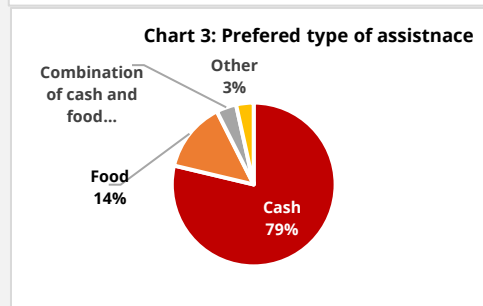
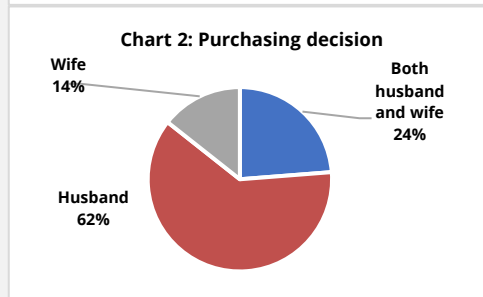
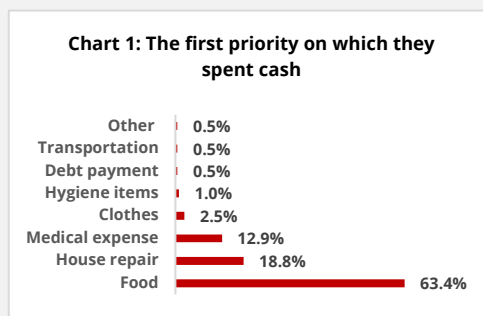
Purchasing priority and decision:


- Majority of the respondents (>63 per cent) said that their priority was to buy food followed by house repair (19 per cent), medical expense 13 per cent and remaining said clothes, hygiene items. Refer to Chart 1 for more details.
- 62 per cent of respondents said husband, 24 per cent said both husband and wife and 14 per cent said wife. This shows purchasing decision is with male in majority of households in community.
- 77 per cent of the respondents indicated that cash assistance received was useful to cover their most important household needs and 23 per cent mentioned the amount of cash received was not sufficient.

Preferred assistance type:

- 79 per cent of respondents preferred cash assistance than in-kind, 14 per cent respondents preferred food, 4 per cent respondents preferred combination of cash and food and the remaining 3 per cent respondents preferred others (tents, shelter, cash, and shelter).
- All respondents were aware of the amount of cash they were entitled to receive.

The PDM findings indicated that, while most respondents found the amount of cash provided sufficient for urgent needs, some felt it was insufficient due to factors such as large household size and expensive food. Access to assistance and information varied, with different waiting times for cash distribution and varying transportation expenses. All respondents felt safe handling and traveling with the cash. Purchasing priorities included food, house repairs, and medical expenses, with male members predominantly making purchasing decisions. Most respondents preferred cash assistance over in-kind support, with a few opting for food or a combination of cash and food. Overall, the PDM findings reflect satisfaction with the information provided and safety measures during distribution.



 Health & Care <i>(Mental Health and psychosocial support / Community Health / Medical Services)</i>	People reached: 14,897		
	Female > 18: 4,200	Female < 18: 2,750	
	Male > 18: 4,300	Male < 18: 2,850	
Objective:	The immediate risks to the health of the affected populations are reduced through improved access to health care		
Key indicators	Indicator	Actual	Target
	<i># of health facilities (mobile/fixed) supported with staff, equipment and/or running costs for the provision of primary health services.</i>	5	5

# of people reached with primary health services.	8,105 ⁷	50,000
# of staff and volunteers trained on CBHFA/ECV	21	450
# of people reached with CBHFA services by trained volunteers.	4,574	31,500
# of people provided with MHPSS interventions including PFA.	7,588 (DRC is supporting ARCS in MHPSS)	NA
# of people trained on PFA and other MHPSS technical trainings	37	30

ARCS, with the support of the IFRC Secretariat, reached more than 2,735 people with primary health and care services such as first aid and transportation of serious cases to the hospital through two MHTs during the early days of the operation. Five new emergency MHTs were established in December 2023 under the shared leadership of the Norwegian Red Cross and IFRC Secretariat. The newly recruited health staff, comprising five medical doctors, five midwives, five nutrition counselors, five pharmacists, five nurses, and five community mobilizers, were subjected to comprehensive training sessions encompassing health emergency response and induction programmes. As of 31 January 2024, the five MHTs provided primary health care services to 5,370 people (1,494 males, 2,532 females, 706 boys under 5 years and 638 girls under 5 years).

Screenings for malnutrition identified 47 cases out of 466 examinations. For moderate acute malnutrition (41 cases), necessary medical prescriptions and recommendations were provided. Severe cases (6 cases) were referred to nearby nutrition service providers for further investigation and treatment. In terms of immunization, 181 children and eight pregnant women received age-appropriate vaccinations. Health education sessions, both group and individual, informed 9,350 people on various health topics, including immunization, breastfeeding, weaning, nutrition, family planning, hygiene, and sanitation.

ARCS, with support from the IFRC, is planning to provide accommodation for the emergency MHTs by utilizing existing Connexus (facilities/infrastructure) in each site, with the procurement process currently underway. Additionally, the organization will soon receive first-aid kits for CBHFA activities in the earthquake affected areas. The ARCS is being supported by the IFRC Secretariat and NorCross, with funding from the IFRC Emergency Appeal, to facilitate the operations of the five MHTs.

ARCS deployed 22 CBHFA volunteers (11 males and 11 females) to assess the situation and provide humanitarian assistance in the earthquake-affected areas. The volunteers were deployed in various earthquake-affected districts, villages, and even open areas within Herat city, where people sought shelter due to earthquake-related fear and aftershocks. These volunteers provided first aid and psychological first aid services to **4,574 people** (1,255 males and 1,601 females, and 1,315 children) from 1,718 households. To plan for upcoming interventions, a



ARCS medical staff providing health service in Herat province. (Photo: NorCross)

⁷ 2,735 people reached by the two MHTs supported by IFRC Secretariat during early days of the operation while 5,370 people were reached by the five new MHTs in December 2023 and January 2024.

coordination meeting took place at the field level in December 2023, involving the head of the ARCS west region, the head of Herat ARCS branch, CBHFA supervisors, and CBHFA trainers. The meeting focused on orienting CBHFA supervisors and trainers and developing action plans with CBHFA field staff.

Federation-wide response

Additionally, ARCS deployed 14 health facilities (11 MHTs and three static clinics) with the support of DRC (two MHTs) and NorCross (Nine MHTs) in the early days of the operation. The services included first aid and transportation of serious cases to the hospitals in Herat City. Furthermore, ARCS with support from the DRC, trained 35 volunteers and two CBHFA trainers (19 female and 18 males) in October 2023. The trained volunteers provided psychological first aid and outreach support to 7,588 individuals. Likewise, the two MHTs supported by DRC are with psychosocial workers to provide essential medical services, such as first aid and psychological first aid. These MHT personnel were previously trained in PFA, PGI, and CEA. Moreover, the doctors in the MHTs are equipped with competencies in recognizing and supporting patients with mental health conditions through mental health gap action programme (mhGAP). However, there is still a need to train other MHTs in the area with PFA, PGI, and safe referrals. In addition, existing volunteers need to be trained in child-friendly spaces, psychoeducation, and outreach PFA.

Age	0 to 5	6 to 11	12 to 18	19 to 29	30 to 49	50 plus	Overall
Male	267	553	744	756	749	570	3,639
Female	173	598	689	942	859	688	3,949
Total	440	1,151	1,433	1,698	1,608	1,258	7,588



Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

People reached: 14,700

Female > 18: 4,200	Female < 18: 3,000
Male > 18: 4,300	Male < 18: 3,200

Objective:	Immediate reduction in risk of waterborne and water-related diseases in targeted communities.		
Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	# households provided with jerry cans to store water	>2,100	3,000
	# of water sources constructed or rehabilitated (wells with pumps, spring protection, community ponds with filtration).	0	5
	# of constructed household/communal sanitation facilities (this is more than excreta disposal)	0	500
	# of people reached with safe water	0	7,000
# of people (and households) reached by hygiene promotion activities	0	28,000	

As of 31 December 2023, ARCS supported by IFRC Secretariat reached more than 2,100 households with 6,250 jerry cans for them to store water. Each household received 2 to 3 jerry cans based on their household size.

Federation-wide response

Additionally, ARCS distributed 500 bottles of water, 8,866 jerry cans, and 867 hygiene kits with its own source or with the support of other Movement and non-Movement partners to meet the urgent water and hygiene needs of the people. Refer to [MDRAF007 Herat EQ Response OU #1](#) for the overall WASH items distributed by ARCS.

	Protection Gender and Inclusion		People reached: 2,000	
			Female > 18: 213	Female < 18: 1,787
			Male > 18: 0	Male < 18: 0

Objective:	Ensure protection and safety through strengthening existing protection capacity of the affected community and ensuring all facilities, goods and services are dignified and safe to access for all backgrounds.		
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	Indicator	Actual	Target
Key indicators:	<i># of people reached by protection, gender and inclusion programming</i>	2000	4,000
	<i># of staff and volunteers working on the operation who have been briefed or trained on protection, gender, and inclusion</i>	40	250

ARCS supported by IFRC Secretariat carried out PGI CEA assessment together with distribution of dignity kit to 2,000 households benefiting at least one female from each household.

PGI- CEA assessment to collect women voice and concerns

ARCS supported by IFRC PGI team prepared questions for FGD and KII based on the IFRC PGI and CEA standards and safeguarding principle. The ARCS/IFRC team conducted five FGDs and six KIIs to collect thoughts and concerns regarding PGI and safeguarding and engage them in the humanitarian services and organization accountability system. A total of 98 females participated in the FGDs and KIIs.

Key findings of the FGDs and KIIs are as follows:

- Immediate priorities for affected women: shelter and WASH assistance, with concerns about the vulnerability of temporary shelters to severe weather events and shortage of adequate shelters.
- Cultural norms prevent women from sharing tents with unrelated neighbors or families.
- Women have been disproportionately affected by the earthquakes, highlighting the need for targeted assistance strategies.
- Although ARCS distributed emergency shelter and household items, food, multipurpose cash, winterization kits, and dignity kits but additional support is needed in livelihood, food, water, sanitation, and health.
- Protection and health concerns due to lack of functioning WASH facilities and limited access to water for cleaning and washing.
- Absence of female humanitarian workers at distribution points limits women's access to information and services.

- Mental health and psychosocial support interventions are crucial for women's recovery after the earthquakes.

Dignity kit distribution

ARCS supported by IFRC Secretariat distributed dignity kit distribution to 2,000 households in 41 villages in Kushk-e-Kohna district. Refer to below table for detail of distribution and table for dignity kit composition.

Table 4: Number of households reached with dignity kit.

District	# of Villages	# of households Targeted	# of households Reached	# of people benefitted			# of female headed households	# of child headed households
				Male	Female	Total		
Kushk-e Kohna	41	2,000	2,000	-	2000	2,000	22	13

For better understanding and transparency of the dignity kits distribution, the leaflet was designed with information about the available item in the kit, safeguarding and protection messages and available reporting hotline.



ARCS supported by IFRC Secretariat distributed dignity kit and winterization kit to 2,000 households in Herat. (Photo: ARCS)

Table 5: Dignity kit composition

Items	Unit	Quantity
Laundry soap	Pieces	6
Hair comb	Piece	1
Plastic bowel bucket	piece	1
Female shawl	Piece	1
Nail clipper	piece	1
Hand washing soap	pieces	6
Toothpaste and toothbrush	pieces	1-1
Slipper	pair	1
Shampoo	bottle	1
Female underwear	pieces	12
socks	pairs	4
Washable sanitary	pieces	3
Bag	piece	1
Towels	pieces	2
Leaflet with information about the available items	piece	1



Safeguarding, and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse ⁸

Objective:	Ensure safe programing and prevention of harm/sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) to people ARCS serve		
Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	# of children and adults with access to safe and accessible channels to report SEA	7,000	35,000

⁸ Safeguarding and PSEA are part of PGI)

<i># of children and adults reached through awareness raising activities and community mobilizations on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA)</i>	7,000	35,000
<i>% of sites (villages) where awareness raising campaign activities on how to report SEA and how to access survivor centered assistance</i>	0	100
<i># of staff and volunteers trained on PSEA guidelines and protocols</i>	40	250
<i># of staff and volunteers trained in child safeguarding and whistle blower Protection Policies.</i>	40	250
<i># of children and adults reached out on awareness about Child Safeguarding and Protection issues including available services for child protection in targeted community.</i>	0	35,000
<i># of meetings with community (men, women, child, disable etc.) to know if the community has safe access to the services of ARCS and know about the available reporting channels for sharing their feedback and complaints including sensitive feedback.</i>	22	50

The ARCS supported by IFRC PGI, safeguarding and CEA team members conducted 22 meetings with men and women separately in Herat to get community concerns about safe access to the humanitarian services and reporting channels for information, feedback or complaints. The findings revealed that the community has less awareness of PSEA, child safeguarding, referral pathway and reporting channels. They were also asked for some benefits (money) by the community leaders in exchange for their selection to receive humanitarian assistance.

To address these issues, the plan is to increase staff and volunteers' awareness on safeguarding and whistle blower protection policies. Awareness campaigns will be conducted to increase community awareness on key safeguarding messages and reporting channels. The key safeguarding messages will also be integrated into programme IEC materials disseminated to community during programme implementation.

Specifically, awareness-raising campaigns on SEA and survivor-centered approaches are planned for March 2024. Community sensitization on child safeguarding and child protection will be carried out through meetings with the community and programme IEC materials. Additionally, 40 MHPSS volunteers (20 males and 20 females) received orientation on PSEA, child safeguarding and whistle blower protection orientation. The orientation covered how to consider community dignity while providing services and where to report actual or suspected violation of IFRC safeguarding Policies.



Community Engagement and Accountability

Objective:

Ensure the operation is integrating meaningful community participation, timely, open, and honest communication, and mechanisms to listen, respond to and act on feedback to collaboratively understand and address community needs, priorities, and the context.

	Indicator	Actual	Target
Key indicators:	<i>% of people surveyed who report receiving useful and actionable information.</i>	12%	75%
	<i># of staff and volunteers working on the operation who have been briefed on community engagement and accountability and trained on the community feedback mechanism.</i>	33	250
	<i># of feedback comments collected, disaggregated by sex, age and disability, including sensitive feedback linked to SEA, fraud, corruption or protection concerns</i>	44	2,000
	<i>% of people who received a response to their feedback about the operation</i>	100%	100%

ARCS supported by IFRC Secretariat accomplished following activities:

- Developed frequently asked questions (FAQ) or key information about the earthquake response for staff and volunteers.
- Engaged in discussions with BBC Media Action to collaborate on producing life-saving information talks, leveraging expertise of IFRC networks in mental health and psychosocial support. The aim was to disseminate vital information to communities through four local radio stations in Herat.
- Formulated questions for the CEA assessment targeting the communities affected by the earthquake, both male and female.
- Established a hotline to address concerns, questions, and complaints from the community regarding the earthquake response in Herat.
- Distributed 7,000 cards and 200 stickers containing information about the hotline service to the communities.
- Conducted CEA orientation for 33 ARCS psychosocial volunteers (15 males, 18 females).
- Five key informant interviews and one focus group discussion were conducted with males registered for multipurpose cash, while three focus group discussions were held with females who received dignity and winterization kits in Herat Marastoon to assess their needs in November 2023.
- The major needs identified included adequate shelter for all household members, livestock, food storage, and psychosocial support.
- Community feedback collected through interviews and FGDs played a pivotal role in enhancing the quality of the response. Direct engagement with affected community members provided invaluable insights into their immediate needs and priorities. The identification of major needs, such as the necessity of adequate shelter for all household members, including livestock, highlighted the urgent requirements for ensuring the safety and well-being of the affected population. Additionally, the recognition of food storage needs underscored the importance of addressing food security concerns in the disaster's aftermath.
- Furthermore, the acknowledgment of the need for psychosocial support emphasized the operation's commitment to addressing the holistic needs of the community beyond just physical infrastructure. By leveraging this data, the operation was able to tailor its response efforts more effectively, ensuring that



ARCS established feedback and complaint desk at distribution points in Herat. (Photo: ARCS)

assistance programs were aligned with the specific needs and vulnerabilities of the affected population, thereby ultimately enhancing the overall quality and impact of the operation.

- Women were disproportionately affected by the earthquakes and required targeted assistance. Lack of awareness activities focusing on ARCS services for women and female humanitarian workers at distribution points had limited women's access to information and services. The lack of functioning WASH facilities raises concerns for protection and health, and efforts should be made to register and assist women whose husbands are working abroad.

Challenges:

- Training and mobilization of female volunteers in field has been challenging. However, ARCS is discussing within the organization and public authorities for finding the way to mobilise female for reaching the most vulnerable groups such as women and children in the earthquake affected areas.

	Risk Reduction, climate adaptation and Recovery	People reached: 14,774	
		Female > 18: 4,700	Female < 18: 2,792
		Male > 18: 4,300	Male < 18: 2,982
Objective: <i>Communities in high-risk areas are prepared for and able to respond to disaster</i>			
Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	<i># of households receiving winterization kit</i>	2,000	2,000
	<i># of Multi hazard contingency plan developed and tested</i>	In progress	1

Winterization assistance and post distribution monitoring

ARCS with the support of IFRC Secretariat provided winterization kit to 2,000 household comprise of 14,774 people in 41 villages of Kushk-e Kohna district of Herat province in November -December 2023. The kit contains warm clothes for household members to cope with harsh winter in Afghanistan. Refer to below tables for the distribution details and composition of the winterization kit.

Following distribution of the winterization kits, ARCS PMER department carried out post distribution monitoring. total of 176 respondents (175 male, 1 female) were interviewed for the survey. Among them, 67 percent were between 18 and 50 years old, 17 percent were over 50 years old, and 16 percent were under 18 years old. Here are the key findings from the survey:

Access to assistance and information:

- 98 percent of the respondents stated that ARCS staff conducted a sensitization session before cash distribution, while 2 percent responded otherwise.
- 100 per cent of the respondents confirmed that they did not have to pay money or provide other benefits to receive the assistance.
- 85 percent of the respondents reported that they received information about the distribution through community or village elders, while 15 percent mentioned Mulam imam.
- 98 per cent of the respondents were aware of the availability of a complain t desk, person, or place for providing feedback, complaints, or questions about the distribution, while 2 percent were not.
- All the respondents found the location of the distribution point to be convenient for them.

- 66 per cent of the respondents stated that they spent AFN 0-200 on round-trip transportation costs to receive the winterization kits, followed by 22 percent who spent AFN 201-300, and the remaining 9 percent spent AFN 301-500.

Quality and quantity of winterization kits:

- 99 per cent of the respondents regarded the quality of the winterization kits as excellent, while 1 percent rated it as either fair or good.
- 99 per cent of the respondents believed that the quantity of the kits was adequate for their household members, while 1 percent stated that it was insufficient for their household needs.
- 99 per cent of the respondents confirmed that the kits helped them meet their urgent requirements for warm clothes.

Based on PDM findings, most respondents had positive experiences with access to assistance and information, with high percentages receiving sensitization sessions and information without any obligation to pay cash for getting selected to receive winterization kit. Most respondents were aware of complaint avenues and found the distribution point convenient. Regarding winterization kits, almost all respondents were satisfied with the quality, quantity, and effectiveness in meeting their urgent needs for warm clothes.

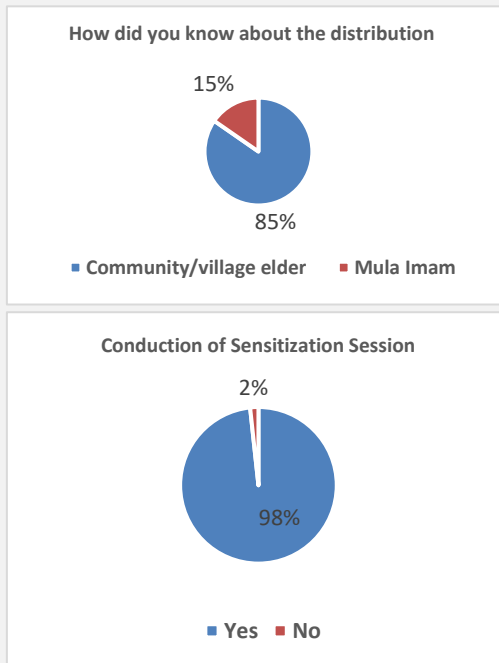


Table 6: Number of households reached with winterisation clothes

District	# of Villages	# of households Targeted	# of households Reached	# of people benefitted			# of female headed households	# of child headed households
				Male	Female	Total		
Kushk-e Kohna	41	2,000	2,000	7,282	7,492	14,774	22	13

Adoption of preparedness for effective response

The preparedness for effective response approach emphasizes the development of local capacities to ensure National Societies are well-equipped to provide services during disasters. Given Afghanistan's vulnerability to disasters, ARCS is actively working to strengthen its response capabilities, with a particular focus on institutional readiness. As part of the Herat earthquake response, ARCS, supported by the IFRC Secretariat, is currently engaged in developing a multi-hazard contingency plan and enhancing the capacity of its volunteers and staff.

Adoption of climate smart and seismic shocks

The performance of the transitional shelter under gravity loads is adequate. The foundation is made of stone masonry lying on a well compacted natural soil. Bracing is provided in the walls of different heights and ring beams are provided at the plinth and lintel top levels to improve the lateral stability and make the structure safe. For better structural integrity it is recommended to provide several vertical reinforcement steel bars in the corners as it will ensure proper connection of the horizontal ring beams and will enhance the overall structural stability. Consequently, it will guarantee the resilience to future seismic shocks to ensure 'build back better'. Furthermore, to make the design climate smart, mud-gypsum plaster is provided to keep the rooms warm and cold in the winter

Table 7: Composition of winterization kit

S.N.	Items	Unit of measurement	Quantity
1	Children sweater	pcs	5
2	Adult sweater	pcs	2
3	Woman's winter shawl	pcs	1
4	Male winter wrap, Patto	pcs	1
5	Winter shoes for adults	pair	2
6	Boots for children	pair	4
7	Socks (pairs)	Pair	12
8	Children woollen winter gloves	pair	4
9	Warm winter woollen children caps	pcs	4
10	Winter coat	pcs	6
11	Bag	pcs	3

and summer sessions, respectively. Moreover, adequate opening is provided to add the max natural daylight to the rooms possible.

Multidisciplinary coordination has been conducted on the challenges and opportunities in land allocation for households with ARCS and other stakeholders to ensure an effective and streamlined response for the affected people. It is important to note that most of the people are willing to move from the current locations affected by the earthquake. Thus, it is imperative to ensure that the newly allocated land is less vulnerable to future seismic shocks.

Federation wide support

DRC supported ARCS to provide winterization assistance to 500 households affected by earthquake in Herat. Each household received one heater and 500 Kg of charcoal. Likewise, TRC supported ARCS to distribute winterization kits, including stoves and coal to 700 households across Gulran and Robat Sangi districts. These kits are essential for households affected by the Herat earthquake, helping them cope with the harsh winter conditions.



ARCS supported by IFRC Secretariat provided winterization kit and dignity kit to 2,000 households including 13 child headed household in Herat province. (Photo: ARCS)



ARCS provided winterization assistance (stove and coal) to 1,200 households affected by earthquake in Herat. Out of which 500 households were supported by DRC and 700 households with TRC. (Photo: Meer Abdullah Rasikh, IFRC)

Note: The ARCS supported by RCRC Movement is implementing Population Movement Operation ([MDRAF013](#)) to assist Afghan returnees. The IFRC allocated CHF 750,000 from its DREF to support ARCS in the operation.

Enabling approaches



National Society Strengthening

Objective:

Ensure that the ARCS has the necessary legal, ethical, and financial foundations, systems and structures, competencies, and capacities to plan and perform.

Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	<i># of ARCS staff and volunteers trained in different sector(s) (disaggregated by sector and gender)</i>	42 ⁹	NA
	<i>ARCS compliance with principles and rules for humanitarian assistance is improved</i>	Ongoing	Yes
	<i>Communities are engaged and kept informed of operational plans and progress</i>	Ongoing	Yes
	<i>Exit Strategy is developed in consultation with the communities</i>	Ongoing	Yes
	<i>ARCS engages with other humanitarian actors for coordinated humanitarian intervention</i>	Ongoing	Yes
	<i>IFRC and National Society are visible, trusted, and effective advocates on humanitarian issues</i>	Ongoing	Yes

In partnership with the NorCross, the IFRC is coordinating the support for the ARCS to assess their financial system and support developing a robust finance system by upgrading the software and creating access for the branches to share real-time data to bring more accountability and sustainability.

Optimizing human resource

- IFRC supports ARCS in developing its human resource capacity through national/provincial level training for the staff and volunteers and strengthening logistics and warehousing capacity such as prepositioning relief items. Further, IFRC is supporting ARCS in institutionalising capacities and establishing a more robust enabling environment where organisational policies and strategies are reviewed/updated/introduced that eventually govern future response, recovery, and community resilience engagement of ARCS.

Enhancing digital capacity at the branch level.

- IFRC established a field office in Harat with internet access and laptops to support ARCS in delivery services. Some new equipment such as monitors, printers, and other information technology accessories are being procured. In addition, training for staff to use technology and Microsoft 365 and other platforms is a priority.

Strengthening PMER-IM capacity of National Society

- ARCS and IFRC PMER teams organized a data collection training for 11 volunteers (5 males and 6 females) in Herat on 5 November 2023. The training aimed to enhance data collection techniques, data quality, and community engagement. Key topics covered during the training included the objectives and timing of exit surveys and PDM, and ethical data collection considerations. The training also included practical group exercises on collecting data using Redrose.

Strengthening the logistics structure

- Development of terms of reference for the logistics structure assessment for all the seven regions is underway and will be completed by February 2024. One of the deliverables will be a plan of action for capacity enhancement. By systematically implementing the action plan, the delegation will fortify ARCS logistics structure, ensuring defined criteria are met across warehouses, procurement, and fleet management, thereby enhancing the capacity to deliver logistics services in both normal and emergency situations.

⁹ ARCS supported by DRC trained 31 ARCS staff and volunteers on MH-PSS and same people were oriented on PGI/CEA with the support IFRC Secretariat. Likewise, ARCS supported by IFRC Secretariat trained 11 staff and volunteers on data collection.

Developing ARCS warehousing capacity

The IFRC has installed four rub halls in Kabul to support ARCS in its operations in 34 provinces. Plans are underway to design and develop a medical warehouse set up in Kabul to serve as a central medical supply chain hub for the rest of the regions. It is planned that the warehouse enhancement will move to the 7 regions gradually on a need-by-need basis.

Establishing software-based warehouse operation

ARCS supported by IFRC Secretariat is assessing the warehousing and stock management procedures to improve the reporting systems. Terms of reference for the warehousing management system in underway and will be completed by the end of February to give way for the tendering process.

Developing logistics and procurement capacity

ARCS, with support from the IFRC Secretariat, organized logistics management training for 60 logistics officers from different regions and branches in December 2023. The training emphasized essential aspects of warehousing, procurement, fleet, medical logistics management, and emergency logistics. The training was well received, with participants expressing satisfaction during the question-and-answer sessions. The engagement showcased improved understanding of logistics procedures among the participants, who also gained practical knowledge.



Coordination and Partnerships

Objective:	<i>Technical and operational complementarity through the cooperation of Movement partners while engaging effectively with outside actors to influence actions at the local, regional, and global levels.</i>		
Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	<i>Movement wide coordination mechanism is described and active¹⁰</i>	Yes	Yes
	<i>ARCS engage with other humanitarian actors for coordinated humanitarian intervention,</i>	Ongoing	Yes
<i>IFRC and ARCS are visible, trusted, and effective advocates on humanitarian issues,</i>	Ongoing	Yes	

Membership Coordination

- ARCS convened five joint meetings with IFRC and PNS to extend timely and coordinated response to the population affected by the earthquake in Herat. Heart Earthquake Operation Strategy was developed in a coordinated and participatory way to respond to the disaster.
- Likewise, ARCS hosted a quarterly Movement coordination meeting participated by ICRC, IFRC Secretariat, and PNS. ARCS senior management and IFRC secretariat updated the humanitarian situation and discussed the ARCS priorities in which the National Society was expecting support of Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement partners.

Engagement with external partners

ARCS and IFRC Secretariat have been coordinating with diverse stakeholders to deliver a unified and effective response to the earthquake-affected communities in Herat. It encompasses aligning the coordinating efforts with

¹⁰ Indicator added to reflect ongoing movement coordination in country

shelter cluster, different private organizations such as Azizi Foundation, Qamar foundation and Khawafi organization; public authorities, and other national and international non-governmental organizations such as Rahila Afghan Aid and Rehabilitation (RAAR), IOM and UNHCR to maximize resources, avoid duplication, and address the multifaceted needs of the affected populations.



Secretariat Services

Objective: *Technical and operational complementarity through the cooperation of Movement partners while engaging effectively with outside actors to influence actions at the local, regional, and global levels.*

	Indicator	Actual	Target
Key indicators:	<i># of surge/rapid response personnel deployed to support the operation</i>	5	6
	<i># of evaluations conducted</i>	0	1

Surge capacity

During the reporting period, six people have been deployed as Rapid Response Personnel for the operation, two of which were deployed remotely (for the role of Information Management) and one was Communication Coordinator. The two role profiles supporting in country are Health Coordinator and Shelter Coordinator. While there was in-country support from Asia Pacific communication unit in November 2023. Also, the IFRC hired a Preparedness and Response Delegate to support developing a multi-hazard contingency plan for the ARCS.

Communications

Below are some highlights on Communication activities:

- Shared images and video footage of ARCS response with RCRC partners and media agencies to highlight the humanitarian impact of the earthquake and Red Cross and Red Crescent response efforts. The most recent photos and key message can be accessed [here](#)
- Representatives and spokespersons of the IFRC and PNS are participating in [media interviews](#) to [highlight](#) the humanitarian needs and to advocate for allocation of resources to support the Red Cross Red Crescent response.
- Deployed a communication surge personnel to Kabul in November 2023 to support communication and media matters. Along with regular updates on key messages, images, and videos, [social media posts](#) and messaging, [earthquake profile video](#), and in-depth stories are currently in the process.
- Published an article on [Afghanistan: Three months after Herat earthquake, an urgent need for shelter](https://www.ifrc.org/) at <https://www.ifrc.org/>

Community Engagement and Accountability

- ARCS activated a hotline service to receive community's concerns, questions, and complaints related to Herat earthquake response. The National Society distributed 5,000 cards and 200 stickers with information about hotline services to communities in Herat.

Logistics and Supply Chain

- Supply chain management teams of ARCS and IFRC are supporting the operation to ensure timely and efficient mobilization of relief supplies to the affected areas. The mobilization table for Appeal MDRAF007 has been updated and is available [here](#).
- The IFRC Afghanistan Country Delegation has been providing procurement, warehousing, and transportation services to the response and collaborating with PNS to avail the much-needed aid.

- The ARCS has the existing capacity for warehousing on site and all stock management operations have been conducted from there. There seems to be a minor challenge with stock management information which the IFRC Supply Chain Team will work with the ARCS Logistics directorate to address.

PMER-IM

- ARCS, in collaboration with IFRC, implemented a centralized online database system for the earthquake response operation. The field data collection focal point uses these tools to submit the collected figures relevant to the ARCS response operation, which can then be retrieved by anyone who requires it. Because of internet connectivity problems, data could not be populated directly from the remote areas in 5WH table (What, where, when, who, whom and how many). Instead, data focal points at the provincial branch collected and consolidated the figures. These tools streamline the process of collecting response-related data from the field, ensuring efficiency and minimal delays in reporting.

D. FUNDING

As of 31 December 2023, the Emergency Appeal coverage is approximately 40 per cent per cent (including in-kind donations) against a funding requirement of CHF 120 million. The donor response can be accessed [here](#). Approximately, CHF 3 million has been obtained for Herat Earthquake Operation Strategy against a funding ask of CHF 9 million. A financial report for the operation will be available in the next reporting cycle.

Contact information

For further information, specifically related to this operation please contact:

At the Afghan Red Crescent Society:

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For Performance and Accountability support (planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting enquiries):

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Reference documents

Click here for:

- [Previous Appeals and updates](#)
- [IFRC Emergencies Landing Page](#)

How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere the **Code of Conduct** for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) in Disaster Relief, the **Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response (Sphere)** in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable, to **Principles of Humanitarian Action** and **IFRC policies and procedures**. The IFRC's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

Annex I: Map for number of people reached through different sectoral intervention in different districts of Herat province.

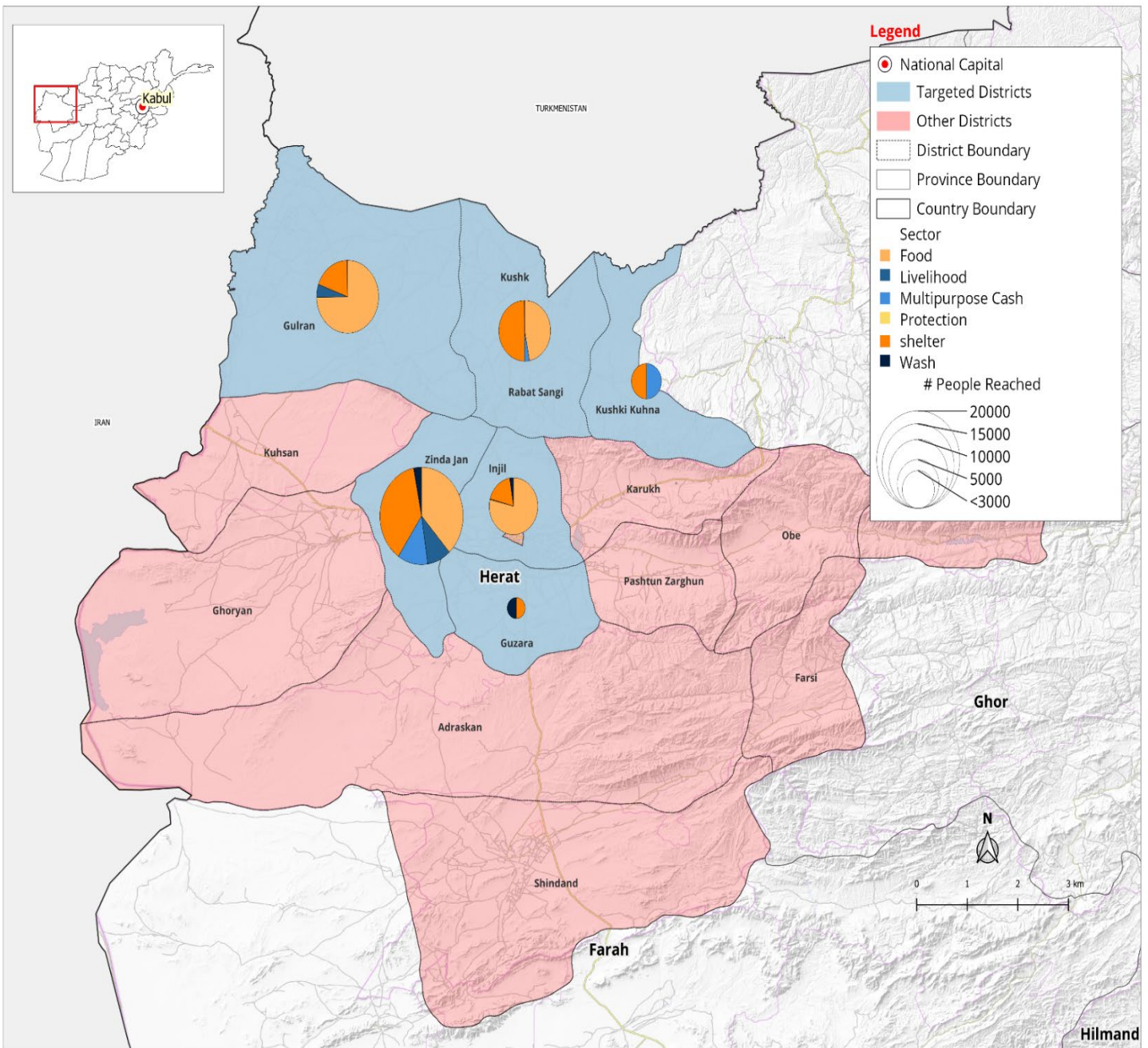


Afghanistan: Herat Earthquake

ARCS Response (people reached)

Operation Updates #2

As of 16 Jan 2024



The maps used do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies or National Societies concerning the legal status of territory or its authorities.