Situation Update

On October 7, 2023, a 6.3 magnitude earthquake hit the western region of Afghanistan, affecting Herat province and followed by a series of powerful aftershocks over the next 24 hours. The epicenter was 30 km northeast of Zindajan district. The quakes were also felt in neighboring Badghis and Farah provinces. According to OCHA, 1,294 people have died, and 1,688 injured across 11 villages in Zindajan district, where all homes are reportedly destroyed. In addition, 485 people are reported missing. In total, 12,110 people have been affected across Gulran, Injil, Kohsan, Kushk Robat-e-Sagani and Zindajan districts, with 300 families displaced. While search-and-rescue operations remain ongoing, the exact numbers of casualties and houses/properties destroyed are still not fully confirmed.

The earthquake caused widespread humanitarian needs, including shelter, food, health, protection, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and livelihoods. The situation is expected to deteriorate with the onset of winter and the ongoing displacements due to insecurity in the country. Families displaced by the earthquakes are in crowded temporary shelters with limited water. The potential increase of infectious diseases in the aftermath of the earthquake is of concern.

International Medical Corps Response

International Medical Corps is coordinating with humanitarian actors, including UN agencies, NGOs, and the Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA), to plan and implement a collective and effective response to the deadly earthquake. International Medical Corps is coordinating with Afghanistan humanitarian partners to ensure that our relief efforts are aligned with and complementary to the collective response.

While our teams are working tirelessly to assess the needs and vulnerabilities of the affected population on the ground, our first batch of relief items, including winterization kits, have been dispatched to Zindajan district, the most significantly affected area. The winterization kits will help families whose belongings have been lost and buried under heaps of rubble cope with the onset of winter in Herat. We are also working to establish a mental health and psychosocial support
(MHPSS) working group for the Herat province response in the western region, train frontline responders on psychological first aid (PFA) and lead the infant and young-child feeding (IYCF) technical working group in Herat at the request of Nutrition cluster. In the coming days, our priority is to provide lifesaving services, including health, MHPSS, shelter, WASH, protection, and non-food items (NFI) to the affected people in Zindajan and Injil districts in Herat province. We are also taking all necessary measures to ensure the safety and well-being of our staff and partners on the ground.