

SITUATION UPDATE



A remote village in Kunar province damaged by the earthquake.

Just before midnight on August 31, a powerful earthquake struck multiple provinces in eastern Afghanistan, with Kunar province (including Asadabad city, and Chapadara, Chowkai, Dara-e-Pech, Nurgul and Watapor districts) worst affected. The disaster has caused catastrophic loss of life, thousands of injuries and widespread destruction of homes and infrastructure. Many of the hardest-hit villages are in remote mountainous areas, where access routes have been blocked by rockslides, severely restricting rescue and relief operations.

According to the Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA) and provincial health facilities, Kunar province has suffered the heaviest toll, with at least 800 deaths and more than 2,500 injuries—particularly in Chapadara, Chawkay, Noorgul, Nurgul, Peachdara and Souki districts, where hundreds of homes are damaged or destroyed, and many remain trapped under debris. About 800 injured people have been hospitalized in Kunar and Nangarhar, including 100 in Asadabad Hospital and two referred to Jalalabad. Nangarhar has reported nine deaths and 150 injuries, Laghman 45 injuries and Nuristan three. The ANDMA minister is on the ground coordinating relief efforts, distributing food, water, tents, blankets and kitchen items, while NGOs and partners are deploying health teams, ambulances, food support, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services. Coordination will be led by ANDMA for the first three days before transitioning to a dedicated committee, with partners encouraged to share plans and resources.

The earthquake has caused severe damage to infrastructure and livelihoods, particularly in Kunar's Chawkay and Nurgul districts, where hundreds of houses have been destroyed or rendered uninhabitable. Multiple villages remain inaccessible due to rockslides blocking key roads; the disruption to transportation has also affected the delivery of health services in remote areas.

The situation in Nangarhar Hospital, which has been treating most of the severely injured, has been described as critical: 219 patients are currently admitted, and numbers are expected to rise. Laghman Provincial Hospital is also receiving casualties, with 70 patients reported in the morning of September 1. Hospitals face acute shortages of consumable medical supplies, with the most urgent needs including medicines, WASH services and emergency tents. A coordinated response is being led by the Health Cluster, with 22 teams deployed for needs assessments. Rapid phone-based evaluations are underway.

Priority needs include urgent medical assistance for trauma and surgical cases, rapid restoration of access to remote villages, emergency shelter for displaced households, and the provision of food, clean water and non-food items.

FAST FACTS

- A major earthquake struck eastern Afghanistan near midnight on August 31. Kunar province is worst affected: initial figures indicate that at least 800 people have been killed and more than 2,500 injured, with these numbers expected to rise as search-and-rescue efforts continue. In Chawkay and Nurgul districts, hundreds of homes were damaged or destroyed, and many people remain trapped in remote areas cut off by rockslides. Rescue efforts involve helicopters, ambulances, mobile health teams and emergency supplies, with critical patients airlifted to Jalalabad and Kabul.

OUR FOOTPRINT

- International Medical Corps has operated in Afghanistan since our founding in 1984, providing primary and secondary healthcare, training, health education, emergency response, mental health and psychosocial support, nutrition services, protection services, community empowerment, and water, sanitation and hygiene services.

OUR RESPONSE

- International Medical Corps is distributing prepositioned humanitarian supplies, including winterization kits and tents, and is ready to deploy a health team to support the emergency response.

Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) for survivors and frontline responders is also critically needed. Additional air assets are required to sustain evacuations and deliver supplies until road access is restored.

The next steps involve continuing coordinated search-and-rescue operations in inaccessible areas, maintaining air evacuations for critical patients, and ensuring the delivery of urgent medical supplies. As access improves, rapid needs assessments will be conducted, and humanitarian partners will mobilize additional shelter, food and non-food relief for affected households.

International Medical Corps Response

International Medical Corps, which has worked in Kunar for the last 22 years and has activities in Nangarhar and Nuristan, is exploring the possibility of deploying emergency health, nutrition, MHPSS, WASH and protection teams to the affected areas, in coordination with the relevant authorities and other humanitarian players.

Our teams on the ground are closely monitoring the situation and assessing needs. We are distributing pre-positioned winterization kits to the affected areas in eastern Afghanistan, which currently have significant humanitarian needs, given that organizations are responding simultaneously to an influx of returnees of refugees from Pakistan, problems in flood-affected communities and, now, additional needs in earthquake-impacted districts.

International Medical Corps will work in close coordination with other humanitarian players to ensure the timely and equitable distribution of the winterization kits and tents. Furthermore, we are prepared to deploy a health team to support the emergency response and address urgent medical needs in the affected communities as funding allows.