European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations

Afghanistan

Introduction

Persistent insecurity and intensified conflict continue to cause large-scale suffering and displacement of people throughout Afghanistan and the neighbouring region. The lack of protection for civilians highlights an urgent need to promote International Humanitarian Law across all parties to the conflict. Attacks on healthcare and education institutions by armed groups have recently reached a record high. The European Union’s main focus is providing live-saving aid through emergency medical care, protection services and cash assistance.

What are the needs?

According to the United Nations, the first half of 2019 saw a continued high number of civilian casualties, with more than 3,800 people killed or injured. More than 230,000 people fled their homes due to conflict from January to August 2019, bringing the total number of displaced people to almost 3.4 million. Increased armed activities and political tensions in the lead-up to the elections in September have intensified fighting with a heavy toll on civilians as a result.

The conflict continues to limit people’s access to basic services and lifesaving assistance, with the closure of some public health and education facilities, as well as limited safe access for aid workers in rural areas. It is estimated that at least 2 million people are in need of essential health services. An estimated 13.5 million people do not have enough to eat, and at least 3.5 million people are in desperate need of food assistance.

The risks of natural hazards further aggravates the humanitarian needs. The aftermath of the 2018 drought and 2019 floods continue to affect over 6.2 million people in 22 out of 34 provinces across Afghanistan.

Some 5.8 million refugees have returned to Afghanistan since 2002, including more than 800,000 in 2018. The influx of the returnees has strained the capacity of existing services and caused concerns about their ability to re-integrate. Meanwhile, at least 6 million Afghans still live as refugees in neighbouring Iran and Pakistan, many of them without registration or legal status.
How are we helping?

In 2019, the EU allocated €27 million in humanitarian support to ensure critical relief assistance to the most vulnerable including the victims of war, forced displacement and natural disasters. Interventions focus on providing emergency healthcare, shelter, food assistance, access to clean water and sanitation facilities, and protection services, targeting women and children. Of the total amount of funding, €2 million is used to address the most pressing needs of people affected by the devastating March 2019 floods.

The EU funds the Emergency Response Mechanism (ERM), which ensures timely and flexible emergency assistance to people who have been recently displaced. Since the beginning of 2019, the ERM programme has reached 180,000 people in 29 provinces through the delivery of cash grants, clean water and access to sanitation services. The ERM’s initial provision of life-saving assistance allowed other humanitarian agencies to coordinate and plan further assistance in the mid- and long-term and enabled the EU’s humanitarian partners to deliver advocacy efforts for the early mobilisation of development and stabilisation funds.

Furthermore, the EU supports life-saving health services for victims of the conflict, whilst also ensuring access to healthcare for people in areas where regular services are disrupted due to conflict. Health facilities continue to report record-high admission levels of conflict-related trauma cases. EU humanitarian funding supports the delivery of emergency treatment and related psychological assistance to close to 5,000 Afghans each month. The EU also provides nutritional support in view of the more than 1.5 million children under 5 suffering from acute malnutrition in Afghanistan.

The EU also funds education in emergencies projects for children who were forced out of school due to conflict or displacement and in order to facilitate effective implementation of principled humanitarian action, also supports humanitarian flights, the provision of security information to NGOs, and the coordination of humanitarian intervention.

The EU has funded humanitarian operations in Afghanistan since 1992, providing up to €832 million to date. Funds are allocated strictly on the basis of the humanitarian principles of independence, impartiality and neutrality to ensure access to those in need.

European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations - B-1049 Brussels, Belgium - E-mail: echo-info@ec.europa.eu
Website: http://ec.europa.eu/echo - Facebook: @echumanitarian.aid - Twitter: @eu_echo - Instagram: @eu_echo