

# REACH MONTHLY BULLETIN

OCTOBER  
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## AFGHANISTAN | Three earthquakes in one week intensify existing humanitarian needs.

Between 7 and 15 October, western Afghanistan experienced three powerful earthquakes and numerous aftershocks. Registering a 6.3 magnitude, the earthquakes have caused widespread destruction and loss of life in Herat Province, located at the epicentre of this disaster. The [Herat Earthquake Response Plan](#), published 16 October, estimates that 114,000 people urgently need humanitarian assistance as they cope with destroyed homes, health facilities, schools, and water networks.



Photo credit: IFRC/ Meer Abdullah Rasikh – Afghanistan, 2023

In the aftermath of the earthquakes, humanitarian responders have also sought to understand the status of marketplaces in affected areas, to determine whether households can access markets to obtain food and other critical items like fuel, safe water, warm clothing, and hygiene products. As multiple organizations prepared to conduct market assessments to inform their individual responses, the REACH team in Afghanistan initiated an [ad-hoc round of the Joint Market Monitoring Initiative \(JMMI\)](#) to provide one harmonised assessment for the entire response – and, in turn, reduce the duplication of efforts.

Through this exercise, REACH collected data from 40 marketplaces across six districts in Herat Province. Key findings from this round of the JMMI include:

- Whilst markets were open, and only marginal price increases for food items and NFIs were found compared to the previous months, **lack of availability or limited access to certain key items has become an increasing concern.**
- **Safe drinking water was reported to be unavailable in most markets across Zindajan and Injil districts.** At the same time, preliminary needs assessments have found that up to a third of earthquake-affected households lack access to improved water sources and face increased public health risks.
- **Coal was also largely unavailable across Herat province.** Whilst other fuel sources were trading in markets they were considerably more expensive than coal, presenting possible **issues around affordability of winter fuel sources.** This is especially concerning given the onset of winter – which is often harsh in Afghanistan, particularly in mountainous areas – as well as the damage to homes, which has forced many families into makeshift shelters or informal sites.



*With ongoing shocks still affecting the region, it is likely that prices will continue to increase over time, particularly if limited availability persists. Continual close monitoring will be critical to inform effective assistance for the medium and longer term.*

**– Aubrey Bauck, REACH Afghanistan Country Coordinator**

In addition to the immediate impact caused and the urgent need for lifesaving aid in Herat, the earthquakes serve as a reminder of Afghanistan’s vulnerability to natural disasters – the Hindu Kush mountain range along the border with Pakistan is [“one of](#)

[the most seismically active regions in the world](#)” – and the need for continual hazard risk monitoring and disaster risk reduction (DRR) efforts over the longer term.

Full JMMI Overview

Key Findings Presentation

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## More REACH News:



oPt Article

Following the escalation of conflict and violence in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) since 7 October 2023, IMPACT has been coordinating internally and mobilizing our teams to provide partners with capacity and knowledge, supporting their humanitarian response. Read more about our work [here](#), including three recent maps produced in collaboration with the Global Shelter Cluster.



Syria Article

A recent escalation in violence across northern Syria has triggered significant displacement in Greater Idlib in the northwest, as well as damaged critical civilian infrastructure in the northeast. Read our [latest analysis](#) following a Rapid Needs Assessment conducted by the REACH Syria team.



DRR Day Article

13 October marked the [International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction](#). Read our [interview with Nataliia Makaruk](#), IMPACT’s in-house Senior Climate & Disaster Assessment Officer, as she discusses this year’s theme: Fighting inequality for a resilient future.

## About REACH

REACH is a leading humanitarian initiative that collects primary data and produces in-depth analysis to help aid actors make **evidence-based decisions in support of crisis-affected people**. With this in mind, our flagship research programmes aim to inform the prioritisation of aid according to levels of need - both crisis-level planning and targeted rapid response - as well as decisions around appropriate modalities of aid. Through our team of assessment, data, geospatial, and thematic specialists, we promote the design of **people-centred research** and set standards for collecting and analysing **rigorous, high quality data** in complex environments

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