

Context

Afghanistan remains one of the world's most severe humanitarian crises, with 22.9 million people in need of assistance. In 2025, the humanitarian situation was compounded by mass returns from Iran and Pakistan, economic disruptions, and two major earthquakes—a 6.0 magnitude quake in August that devastated eastern provinces, killing nearly 2,000 people and destroying over 8,400 homes, and a 6.3 magnitude quake in November that affected nearly 24,000 people in northern provinces. With winter underway, thousands remain without safe shelter, facing heightened protection risks, particularly for women and girls.¹

CERF allocations to Afghanistan in 2025

Afghanistan is so far the second largest recipient of CERF funding in 2025. Throughout the year, CERF has allocated \$41.6 million to ensure critical support to the most vulnerable people affected by displacement and natural disasters.

In **February 2025**, at a time of severe underfunding for Afghanistan's humanitarian response, CERF stepped in with a \$20 million allocation through its **Underfunded Emergencies** window. This critical funding was strategically directed by the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC) to safeguard vulnerable women, adolescent girls, and children by ensuring access to essential services and protection at family and community levels. The allocation targeted approximately 1.4 million people with life-saving assistance in Health, Nutrition, WASH, and Protection (GBV), prioritizing cash assistance wherever feasible. Recipient agencies (UNICEF, WHO, and UNFPA) worked closely with national NGOs and women-led organizations to deliver culturally appropriate, gender-sensitive support. Complementing this effort, UNICEF received an additional \$1 million in dedicated CERF climate action funding to implement a climate-smart WASH project, strengthening adaptive capacity and resilience to future climate shocks.

On **1 April**, as worsening drought conditions were forecasted, the collective **Anticipatory Action (AA)** framework facilitated by OCHA was triggered, prompting CERF to disburse \$6.75 million and the Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund \$7.5 million. This is the first AA framework jointly developed and funded by CERF and a Country-based Pooled Fund, with both funding sources simultaneously activated.² Together, the Pooled Funds enabled 5 UN agencies (UNICEF, UNFPA, WFP, FAO, UN Women), 6 international NGOs and 10 Afghan local organizations, to support at-risk communities ahead of peak drought with a comprehensive package of assistance, including cash support, livestock protection packages, WASH interventions, as well as protection and health activities.

By **July 2025**, Afghanistan's fragile infrastructure was overwhelmed by the mass return of undocumented migrants, particularly from Iran, compounded by earlier returns from Pakistan. Amid severe funding gaps, CERF provided a timely \$10 million allocation through its **Rapid Response (RR)** window to assist 560,211 people, including women, children, and persons with disabilities. The funding focused on life-saving assistance – including multipurpose cash, food, protection, shelter, and non-food items – delivered by FAO, IOM, UNICEF, WFP and WHO in high-risk districts. This allocation was critical to stabilize communities under immense strain while safeguarding the most vulnerable.

¹ IOM. Afghanistan Update, 23 November 2025. [flash-updates-eg-in-eastern-and-northern-afg-2.pdf](#)

² For more information on the complementarity of OCHA Pooled Funds in the AA framework activation for Afghanistan, please see this [infographic](#).

On **1 September 2025**, less than 24 hours after a 6.0+ magnitude earthquake struck eastern Afghanistan – leaving nearly 500,000 people in urgent need – CERF acted immediately, allocating \$5 million through its RR window to kick-start life-saving assistance. UN agencies including UNICEF, WFP, WHO, and UNFPA rapidly delivered emergency shelter, WASH, food assistance, health services, and child protection to more than 140,000 people.

Overview of CERF allocations to Afghanistan 2021 – 2025 (as of 30 November 2025)

Year	RR (US\$)	Emergency Type	UFE (US\$)	Emergency Type	Total (US\$)
2021	\$45M \$20.3M \$15M	Post-conflict needs Post-conflict needs Drought	\$12.5M	Post-conflict needs	\$92.8M
2022	\$10M	Earthquake	N/A	N/A	\$10M
2023	\$10M \$5M \$18M	Displacement Earthquake Post-conflict needs	\$20.6M	Heat/Cold Wave	\$53.6M
2024	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2025	\$5M \$10M \$6.7M	Earthquake Displacement Drought	\$20M	Post-conflict needs	\$41.7M
Total 2021-25	\$145M		\$53.1M		\$198.1M

Biography of Mr Indrika Ratwatte, Deputy Special Representative for Afghanistan with the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator.



Mr. Ratwatte brings over 30 years of experience in humanitarian affairs and protection in complex and crisis settings, including over 20 years of working on Afghanistan and regional issues. He started his career with the United Nations in 1992, with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and continued his career with the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in 1993. His most recent positions have included Director of the UNHCR Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific, where he previously also served as Deputy, and UNHCR Representative in Pakistan. He served with UNHCR as Deputy Representative in the United Republic of Tanzania and Pakistan, along with prior assignments in Thailand, Croatia, China, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Mr. Ratwatte holds a Master’s degree in International Affairs from Columbia University, United States, and a Bachelor’s degree in English and Sociology from the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka. He is also an attorney-at-law from Sri Lanka Law College.

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