

MEDIA RELEASE: Over 1000 lives lost as disaster again strikes Afghanistan

23 June 2022

A magnitude 6.1 earthquake has devastated Afghanistan and Pakistan, causing over 1,000 deaths and a further 1,600 injuries.

This earthquake has proved to be the deadliest in two decades, further devastating a population already struggling with a devastating food crisis from the combined impacts of long-term drought and hunger, COVID-19 and decades of political instability.

“This latest tragedy is truly heartbreaking for a populace that has already gone through so much,” says Aloysius Canete, Caritas Australia’s Humanitarian Emergencies Lead.

Late last year the United Nations anticipated that 97 per cent of the population in Afghanistan would be pushed into extreme poverty by June 2022. This happened even faster than anticipated, as food and fuel prices skyrocketed globally due to the war in Ukraine.

“Our partners on the ground report that crops are wilting, and that millions of families are now running out of options if they can no longer afford to buy basic goods since prices have increased exponentially. With this earthquake, we know that at least 1,800 households have been destroyed and many more damaged, which leaves many vulnerable families reliant on humanitarian aid to survive.”

Humanitarian organisations including Cordaid, a member of the international Caritas network, are responding to the earthquake in the affected province of Paktika, conducting needs assessments on the ground and providing emergency including medicine, temporary shelter and emergency food distributions.

“For a country that is already facing such extreme levels of poverty and hunger, rebuilding and recovery from this latest crisis are going to present unusual challenges – it will be exceptionally hard to house and feed families impacted by this earthquake in a country where millions are already displaced and suffering from hunger.”

Caritas Australia continues to work with partner on the ground, CRS, to provide long-term emergency support including emergency cash assistance, food security support and education to the most drought-affected rural communities.

Caritas Australia is currently raising funds to support communities in Afghanistan.

Visit www.caritas.org.au/donate/emergency-appeals/afghanistan or call 1800 024 413 toll free to provide much needed support to vulnerable communities in Afghanistan.

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Note: Aloysius Canete, Caritas Australia’s Humanitarian Emergencies Lead is available for interview.