



15 February 2014 – Afghanistan is facing a worsening humanitarian situation and risks becoming a “forgotten emergency”.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has launched this year’s Common Humanitarian Action Plan (CHAP) in Kabul, Afghanistan, identifying a worsening humanitarian situation but reducing the appeal to \$406 million from last year’s \$474 million.

“At the start of 2014, Afghanistan faces an uncertain future, where the political and security transitions are bound to bring about major changes to the country and its people,” said the Humanitarian Coordinator for Afghanistan, Mark Bowden, speaking at the launch event.

Presidential elections in April to select a successor to Hamid Karzai and the pull-out of most or all international forces by the end of December make this year a turning point for the country.

The use of aid by the NATO-led international forces as a “force multiplier” has been criticized by many in the humanitarian community for endangering the humanitarian principle of neutrality, and also risking the lives of aid workers, for whom Afghanistan is the [world’s most dangerous country](#). In 2013, 80 aid workers in Afghanistan were victims of attacks, kidnappings or killings, according to the Aid Worker Security Database. It is the largest number of incidents any country has seen in a single year since the database began keeping records.

The [Strategic Response Plan](#) says the number of people in need of access to health services has increased from 3.3 to 5.4 million. This year's slightly lower appeal focuses on acute humanitarian needs brought about by "the recent intensification and spread of conflict and the acute emergencies resulting from this", according to the SRP.

"We're going to be very focused, based on what we know about what our actual capacity is and make sure we do that in a quality way," the head of OCHA Afghanistan, Aidan O'Leary, told IRIN. "For us, less is more in the sense of being very prioritized, being very focused, and making sure that we deliver what we say we're going to deliver, and not just being big for the sake of being big."

Last year's humanitarian appeal was the UN's most well-funded, as a percentage, with almost 81 percent (\$384 million) raised.

Despite the large amounts of aid pledged to Afghanistan since the 2001 invasion - around [\\$90 billion](#) - humanitarian financing makes up less than 7 percent of non-security international assistance.

Bowden warned that Afghanistan risked becoming a "forgotten emergency" as international attention shifted to other crises in Syria and the Central African Republic.

*UNRIC's library backgrounder on Afghanistan:* <http://unric.org/en/unric-library/27129>