

Call for applications for DERF funding of rapid response interventions answering to the following humanitarian crisis:

Title: Emergency Humanitarian Assistance in the Middle East

Country and location(s): Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Syria, Lebanon, the Gaza Strip & the West Bank.

DERF Funding Modality: Applicants are to apply for the DERF Funding Modality *Rapid Response* as per the DERF Funding Guidelines.

Call window for submission of applications: Applications are received and processed on an ongoing basis from 18/3/2026 until 8/4/2026 at 12:00 noon CET.

Please note that the DERF office will be closed from 30 March to 6 April and will reopen on 7 April. During this period, applications will not be processed.

Funds allocated for this call: The DERF allocates a total of up to **DKK 5 million** for this call. Applicants can apply for **maximum DKK 749,999** each.

Alert title and location(s)	Alert type, source and date	Crisis type	Information on the humanitarian crisis and emergency relief needs	Known DK org. in crisis location(s)	Assessment of DERF relevance
<p>Title: Emergency Humanitarian Assistance in the Middle East</p> <p>Country & locations: Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Syria, Lebanon, the Gaza Strip & the West Bank</p>	<p>Alert Type: Local Alert</p> <p>Alerting Organisation: Danish Muslim Aid</p> <p>Crisis Start: 28/2/2026</p> <p>Sources supplemented with: UN Geneva Press Briefing, 3/3/2026 International Crisis Group, 6/3/2026</p>	<p>Spike in protracted crisis</p>	<p>Background: A joint U.S.-Israeli attack on Iran, followed by Iranian retaliation against U.S. military assets, Israel and other U.S. allies, has engulfed much of the Middle East in conflict. Since 28 February 2026, hostilities involving Iran, Israel, and the U.S. have intensified, characterised by coordinated strikes on strategic facilities, retaliatory missile and drone launches, aerial interceptions, and elevated military alert levels across the region (ICG, 6/3/2026). The geographic expansion of these developments has heightened instability beyond the primary areas of confrontation, resulting in diplomatic drawdowns, airspace restrictions, and a deterioration in already fragile humanitarian conditions (IFRC, 6/3/2026). As of 6 March, Iranian authorities said more than 1,300 people had been killed in Iran, including at least 150 children at an elementary school in the southern city of Minab. The significant military escalation in the Middle East has claimed civilian lives, damaged and destroyed vital infrastructure and forced hundreds of thousands of people to flee their homes, requiring an immediate response across the region.</p> <p>Humanitarian impact: Even prior to the recent escalation, nearly 25 million people in the affected countries were refugees, internally displaced, or refugees who recently returned home to very difficult conditions (UNHCR, 6/3/2026). The operating environment continues to be shaped by periodic missile and drone activity across parts of the Middle East, as well as disruptions to mobility and essential services (IOM, 10/3/2026).</p> <p>Humanitarian needs are increasing across multiple countries as displacement rises, access constraints intensify, and essential services become strained. In Iran alone, initial estimates from the authorities of 100,000 people leaving Tehran in the first two days of the crisis have now long been surpassed. The country is home to 1.65 million people forced to flee, mostly from Afghanistan, and an overwhelming number are seeking help and support. In Lebanon, large-scale displacement continues following intensified Israeli airstrikes across the South, Bekaa, and Beirut. According to government figures, over 119,700 IDPs reside in over 440 collective shelters, while around 548,000 IDPs reside outside collective centres (OCHA, 9/3/2026). Also in Lebanon, an estimated 500,000 persons have self-registered under the government-led initiative to identify needs and priority areas for assistance. At least 33,600 Syrians and some 3,000 Lebanese have crossed into Syria, according to Syrian authorities (UNRWA, 6/3/2026). Due to the Iran crisis, reduced attention in diplomatic mediation between Afghanistan and Pakistan has potentially</p>	<p>Number of organisations present in the regions: 28</p> <p>Number of organisations with external funding experience (both CSF and DERF grants): 26</p> <p>Number of organisations present in specific localities: 16</p>	<p>Critical emergency and/or protection needs: Yes</p> <p>Particularly vulnerable groups: Yes</p> <p>Timeliness of potential DERF funded intervention: Yes</p> <p>Significant funding gap exists: Yes</p> <p>DERF funds available: Yes</p> <p>Recommend: Activate DERF</p>

<p>IFRC DREF Iraq, 6/3/2026</p> <p>UNHCR Press Release, 6/3/2026</p> <p>UNRWA SitRep, 6/3/2026</p> <p>OCHA SitRep, 6/3/2026</p> <p>OCHA Flash Update #3, 7/3/2026</p> <p>OCHA Flash Update #5, 9/3/2026</p> <p>IFRC Emergency Appeal, 10/3/2026</p> <p>IOM SitRep 10/3/2026</p>		<p>contributed to an escalation in the active conflict along the border, with reports of internal displacement in both countries: an estimated 115,000 in Afghanistan and some 3,000 in Pakistan. For Afghanistan, the hostilities with Pakistan, the situation in Iran, and the unprecedented hunger situation are creating a perfect storm which could throw millions into even worse poverty and hunger (UN, 3/3/2026). While Iraq is not a direct party to the conflict, its geographic location, strategic significance, and the presence of international military interests increase its exposure to indirect and spillover effects. Amid heightened security controls and access restrictions across the West Bank and Gaza, the risk of escalating violence remains significant, especially as humanitarian conditions continue to deteriorate (OCHA, 6/3/2026).</p> <p>Prioritised Emergency Actions: There is an urgent need for emergency interventions. The key humanitarian priorities identified include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection/evacuation and psychosocial support for vulnerable people and restoring family links. • Emergency shelter (tents, as well as medium-term solutions) and Non-Food Items - NFIs (tarpaulins, blankets, mattresses, clothes, and kitchen sets etc.) • WASH (access to clean water, hygiene and sanitation) • Food Security and Livelihoods - FSL, e.g., through Cash & Voucher-Based Assistance (CVA) • Health (access to emergency medical care and health services) <p>The needs outlined are very broad and deemed location-specific depending on existing coping mechanisms, available facilities and access constraints related to a growing number of IDPs and refugees due to an escalation in hostilities. Civil society actors and DERF applicants will need to carefully assess the potential delivery of humanitarian assistance, match and prioritise efforts and ‘modes of assistance’ where they can have the greatest impact, while considering and addressing the access and security challenges as underlined below.</p> <p>Vulnerability: Millions of crisis-affected people are experiencing extreme vulnerability and are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance. In several countries across the Middle East region, vulnerable groups include IDPs, women, children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities and in many cases also those belonging to host communities. DERF applicants are to ensure that proposed humanitarian action clearly describes how target groups are affected by the prevalent crisis.</p> <p>Funding Situation: With such a large-scale crisis the funding needs across humanitarian agencies are staggering. As an example, significant funding gaps persist across all UNHCR’s operations in the affected countries, with an appeal to donors to provide further urgently needed support (UNHCR, 6/3/2026). In Iran, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) has launched a 40-million Swiss franc emergency appeal to scale up the essential activities of the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) as it responds to rapidly increasing humanitarian needs resulting from the ongoing hostilities (IFRC, 10/3/2026).</p> <p>Humanitarian Access: DERF applicants must clearly and thoroughly describe how they plan to reach target groups within the chosen intervention areas and in relation to the planned activities. This information is a</p>		
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