

In Iran, UN aid chief expresses readiness to support post-quake relief efforts

24 November 2017 – Concluding a two-day visit to Iran, the top United Nations humanitarian official said the Organization is ready to fill any gaps in the relief efforts following the devastating earthquake on 12 November that struck the Iran-Iraq border.

“I commend the Government’s efforts to save lives and alleviate the suffering of hundreds of thousands of people in the earthquake zone,” Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Mark Lowcock said Thursday.

“During my visit, I also reiterated the UN’s readiness to support the Government by providing humanitarian aid if it is required to fill any gaps in the response.”

In his meetings with senior officials, Mr. Lowcock discussed the promotion of emergency preparedness efforts, international cooperation in disaster response, enhancing the capacity of the urban search and rescue teams, and exchange of technical expertise and knowledge with Iran.

He welcomed the “Getting Airports Ready for Disasters” exercise which will take place in Iran at the end of November.

Mr. Lowcock’s discussions with the Government also covered major humanitarian crises, including in Syria and in Yemen, and the situation of the Rohingya refugees. He urged the Iranian Government to help facilitate response efforts, assistance and protection for the crisis-affected people, and humanitarian access.

Among those he met with were Minister of Foreign Affairs Mohammad Javad Zarif and Deputy Minister of Interior Shojaei Kiasari.

Meanwhile, the UN Population Fund ([UNFPA](#)) has scaled up its emergency response to meet the needs of women and girls in Iraq, in the wake of the 7.3-magnitude earthquake, which struck an area 30 km southwest of Halabja.

Access to essential, life-saving reproductive health services was also disrupted, with three health facilities damaged in Darbandixan and Halabja alone.

To provide natural delivery services around the clock, UNFPA has deployed a mobile gynaecology clinic to the Shahid Azadi Mama Alaa primary health clinic, the only functioning health facility in Darbandixan, the area that has suffered the most serious damage.

UNFPA is also distributing medicines, reproductive health kits, and dignity

kits, which contain essential hygiene supplies including soap and sanitary napkins.

In addition, the agency is providing much-needed psychosocial support in Darbandixan and plans to conduct psychosocial sessions in Halabja as well.