

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

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April 2025

OCHA addresses the impact of extreme heat on people by coordinating a global response tailored to address climate change-related risks as well as mitigate and reduce humanitarian needs.

OCHA coordinates humanitarian organizations to deliver aid ahead of and during a crisis to the most vulnerable people. OCHA coordinates the data and analysis that informs the response. OCHA also mobilizes the in-kind and financial resources needed for the response.

Lead Heat Entities:

Anticipatory Heat Response Leads, Climate Team
Humanitarian Financing Strategy and Analysis (HFSa) Section
Operations and Advocacy Division (OAD)

Technical Focal Points:

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KEY FACTS

Thermal inequality is a global challenge.

The impacts of extreme heat are growing and unequally distributed globally and socially. Vulnerable populations, especially in the world's poorest countries, face the greatest increases in hot days and warm nights—a trend accelerating for decades.

Marginalized groups, including casual laborers, agricultural workers, migrants, the elderly, children, and pregnant or breastfeeding women, are at higher risk of heat-related illness and death. This thermal inequality highlights the disproportionate burden on those least responsible for climate change.

[Extreme Heat: Preparing for the Heatwaves of the Future \(2022\)](#)

Heatwaves are a silent killer amidst climate disasters.

Heatwaves are among the deadliest and most underestimated climate-related hazards, responsible for a significant and increasing toll on human health and life. While severe storms, droughts, and floods often take the spotlight, heatwaves are a silent killer with a growing impact.

[Extreme Heat: Preparing for the Heatwaves of the Future \(2022\)](#)

Emergency settings create unique challenges during heat events.

In emergency settings, camps and camplike environments often present unique risks during extreme heat events. These areas are typically densely populated, especially when settlements are spontaneous, and are often located on marginal land with limited access to fresh water, shading, greenspaces, and other natural features that could help mitigate extreme temperatures.

[Extreme Heat: Preparing for the Heatwaves of the Future \(2022\)](#)

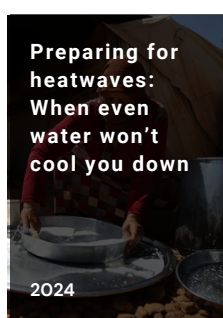
HEAT INITIATIVES

Anticipatory action

OCHA supports the scaling up of anticipatory action through coordinated frameworks that combine forecasts, pre-agreed triggers, activities, and financing to deliver assistance ahead of predicted hazards to prevent or reduce acute humanitarian impacts before they fully unfold. This approach is strengthened by a learning component that continuously improves anticipatory action and builds evidence that early assistance significantly improves the wellbeing of disaster-affected populations.

OCHA is exploring the potential of developing anticipatory action protocols related to extreme heat, and is working at country level to improve the coordination of partners' anticipatory action approaches, including those related to extreme heat.

HEAT RESOURCES



Foundational documents governing institutional heat activities

OCHA Strategic Plan 2023-2026

OCHA's Strategic Plan identifies the climate crisis as one of six trends that will drive need and shape humanitarian action in the coming decade, and integrates it throughout its strategic approach.

SUPPORTING THE SDGS, INCLUDING:



This heat action profile was developed by the [Global Heat Health Information Network](#) in partnership with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), as a contribution to the [United Nations Secretary-General's Call to Action on Extreme Heat](#) (2024). The content was validated by focal points from the profiled international organization / agency, and captures a snapshot of its heat work at the time of publication. The profile will be periodically updated.

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