

**PRESS RELEASE - SPOKESPEOPLE AVAILABLE**



**16 September 2023 - For immediate release**

**Families in hard-to-reach Atlas Mountain communities receive urgent humanitarian assistance from ActionAid and partners**

ActionAid is partnering with local organisation, Enterprise Sociale Maroc, to distribute supplies to affected persons in one of the severely hit areas. The communities of Ait Lkak and Idjhya in the Atlas Mountains received blankets, mattresses, mats and pillows. Working with Enterprise Sociale Maroc and volunteers from Maroc sans Frontieres, ActionAid also distributed rechargeable solar lamps and food baskets containing milk, flour, dates, olive oil, cheese, cous-cous, tuna and water as well as hygiene kits.

**Halima Begum, ActionAid UK CEO, said:**

"Sadly, we're already hearing stories from the Moroccan government of a rise in cases of attempted exploitation of women and girls, particularly through the forced marriage of young girls. It doesn't matter where disasters occur in the world, they precipitate a devastating rise in violence against women and girls. But women in the affected mountain areas - along with the Moroccan authorities - are working with absolute determination to protect themselves and their loved ones. As winter approaches, there is still much, much more to do to ensure the long-term safety of women and girls here and to support them in rebuilding their lives."

**Tifawt Belaid, Senior Programme Manager with ActionAid Denmark, said:**

"Relief supplies are starting to come in, but we must urgently think about shelter as we are heading into a cold, rainy season. Most houses in the affected areas are constructed using traditional materials which are obviously not earthquake resistant, leaving families, especially women and children exposed. Although there is now an emergency programme to protect orphaned children, families will still need help to recover from the long-term impacts of the earthquake."

**Ismail Iftissen, President, Entreprise Sociale Maroc, said:**

"With this tragedy, people have lost their livelihood, which in this area is tourism. The affected area is a mountainous region. It is going to take longer to recover, and assistance is coming very slowly, given the locations of some of these communities and the impact of the disaster. It's a very vulnerable population because they were already in a very difficult economic situation".

**ENDS**

A collection of content related to the earthquake, unique to ActionAid, can be accessed here: <https://stories.actionaid.org/?c=64698&k=a1b17d5dbe>

**Spokespeople available:**

**Halima Begum** is the CEO of ActionAid UK. She speaks English and is currently in Marrakech in Morocco.

**Sara Almer** is the Humanitarian Director at ActionAid International. She speaks English and French, currently in London, UK.

**Oussama Chakkor** is the Country Coordinator of Alianza por la Solidaridad-ActionAid Spain. He speaks Arabic, French and Spanish, currently in Marrakech in Morocco.

**Tifawt Belaid** is Senior Programme Manager with ActionAid Denmark. She speaks English, French and Moroccan Arabic, currently in Rabat in Morocco.

**Kirsten Sutherland** is the Humanitarian Program Coordinator at Alianza por la Solidaridad-ActionAid Spain. She speaks English and Spanish, currently in Seville, Spain.

To contact the ActionAid Press Office email [media-enquiries@actionaid.org](mailto:media-enquiries@actionaid.org) or call [+44 7586107955](tel:+447586107955).

### **About ActionAid**

ActionAid is a global federation working with more than 41 million people living in more than 71 of the world's poorest countries. We want to see a just, fair, and sustainable world, in which everybody enjoys the right to a life of dignity, and freedom from poverty and oppression. We work to achieve social justice and gender equality and to eradicate poverty.