The State of Open Humanitarian Data 2026

A Consolidated Report Based on the OCHA Centre for Humanitarian Data Publication

This report summarizes the key findings and insights from “The State of Open Humanitarian Data 2026” published by the OCHA Centre for Humanitarian Data. The report evaluates the availability, accessibility, and quality of humanitarian crisis data across global humanitarian operations using the HDX Data Grids framework.

Overview

The humanitarian sector experienced severe operational and funding pressures during 2025–2026. Despite these challenges, humanitarian data systems remained partially resilient due to rapid reprioritization efforts and mitigation strategies. According to the report, approximately 68 percent of crisis-related data remained available and up-to-date across 22 humanitarian operations. This represents a decline from 74 percent reported in the previous year.

Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX)

The Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX) remains one of the most significant global platforms for open humanitarian data sharing. The platform hosts nearly 20,000 datasets and supports humanitarian organizations, governments, and researchers. The 22 HDX Data Grids assessed in the report include 411 unique datasets. These datasets were downloaded nearly four times more frequently than the average dataset on HDX, demonstrating their importance for operational decision-making.

Impact of Funding Cuts

One of the report’s central themes is the effect of unprecedented funding reductions on humanitarian data ecosystems. Several humanitarian operations experienced reductions in data collection capacity, field assessments, administrative support, and partner coordination. As a result, important categories such as population estimates and administrative boundary data saw substantial declines in availability.

Regional Variations in Data Availability

Data availability varied significantly across humanitarian contexts. Countries such as Mozambique, Afghanistan, Cameroon, and South Sudan demonstrated relatively strong data coverage and up-to-date information systems. Meanwhile, Venezuela, Burkina Faso, the Syrian Arab Republic, and the State of Palestine showed lower levels of available and current data.

Climate and Hazard Data

The report highlights the growing importance of climate hazard data within humanitarian operations. Open climate datasets are increasingly used for anticipatory action, disaster preparedness, risk forecasting, and infrastructure planning. Climate-related indicators are now considered critical for humanitarian planning and response coordination.

Artificial Intelligence and Web Traffic

The report also discusses the growing influence of AI systems and Large Language Models (LLMs) on humanitarian open-data platforms. Increased automated web traffic from AI bots has created additional infrastructure challenges for open-data repositories and humanitarian information systems. The report emphasizes the need for sustainable infrastructure and governance mechanisms to protect public-interest datasets.

Key Challenges

The report identifies several ongoing challenges: • Reduced funding and operational capacity • Incomplete or outdated crisis data • Uneven regional coverage • Limited support for data maintenance • Infrastructure strain from automated systems and AI crawlers • Risks to institutional humanitarian memory and archival preservation

Key Opportunities

Despite ongoing challenges, the report identifies opportunities for strengthening humanitarian data systems: • Increased use of APIs and automated data sharing • Expansion of climate hazard datasets • Improved interoperability between humanitarian systems • Greater adoption of anticipatory action frameworks • Strengthening collaboration among humanitarian partners

Conclusion

The State of Open Humanitarian Data 2026 demonstrates that humanitarian data systems remain operational despite severe global pressures. However, declining data availability signals growing structural risks within the humanitarian information ecosystem. Sustained investment in open data infrastructure, data governance, climate intelligence, and collaborative humanitarian systems will be essential for maintaining effective crisis response capabilities in the coming years.

Sources

1. OCHA Centre for Humanitarian Data – The State of Open Humanitarian Data 2026
2. Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX)
3. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA)
4. Related humanitarian data analyses and supplementary references