Flash Floods Take Heavy Toll in Herat, Badghis

KARUL - Heavy flash floods generated by seasonal rains mostly affected different parts of Herat and Badghis provinces in the west of Afghanistan.

The flash floods started on Thursday afternoon and assessed last night, local officials said. The official said that at least 20 people were killed in the flash floods which randomly take place in northern and western provinces over the past month. Last month, at least 15 people lost their lives in flash floods in Herat, thousands of acres of agricultural land and hundreds of houses were damaged following heavy rains and flash floods, Herat government's official said in a statement last month.

Ghoryan, Khil Zai Barat Sangi, and Zendanj da regions are mostly affected by the flash floods. A report by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) released in March said that thousands of families have been affected by recent flash floods in the southern provinces of Kandahar and Helmand provinces and that they require humanitarian assistance.

The report says that 4,000 households and more than 33,000 people have been identified as requiring humanitarian assistance as a result of flooding in Kandahar and Helmand provinces.

The report adds that 1,855 houses have been damaged or destroyed in the province.

U.S. Revokes ICC Prosecutor’s Entry Visa Over Afghanistan Investigation

WASHINGTON - The United States has revoked the entry visa of the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Fatou Bensouda, her office said on Thursday, a response to her inquiry into possible war crimes by U.S. forces in Afghanistan.

United Nations human rights experts called the reaction “improper interference” in the work of the world’s permanent war crimes court. It also drew criticism from within the European Union.

“We can confirm that the U.S. authorities have revoked the prosecutor’s visa for entry into the U.S.,” Bensouda’s office told Reuters in an e-mail.

It said it understood the move should not impact Bensouda’s travel to the U.S. to meet the United Nations Security Council on cases referred to the Hague by the UN body.

‘We recommend that applicants apply as early as possible to maximize the chances of being found eligible,' the spokesman said. The U.S. in not a member of the ICC, along with other major powers Russia and China. The office of the prosecutor said on Thursday that Bensouda would exercise her duties “without fear or favor.”

She has been investigating alleged war crimes by U.S. forces in the conflict in Afghanistan since November 2017, including the possible role of U.S. personnel in relation to the detention of prisoners.

The ICC is a court of last resort for situations where national jurisdictions are found to be unable or unwilling to seriously investigate war crimes, genocide or other serious atrocities. (Reuters)