

# GLOBAL EMERGENCY UPDATE

This is the latest report on Catholic Relief Services' ongoing emergency response and recovery activities around the world. Our work is possible thanks to the generous support of private and public donors, the dedication of local partners, and the unwavering presence of Caritas and the local Catholic Church.



## EAST AND SOUTH ASIA



Rohingya refugees shelter in drain pipes at a reception area in southern Bangladesh. Photo courtesy of Tommy Trenchard/Caritas

**BANGLADESH** Escalating tension and violence in Myanmar's Rakhine State has led to a refugee crisis in neighboring Bangladesh, which is hosting an estimated 688,000 Rohingya refugees. Their needs are tremendous and include shelter, food, water, living supplies,

protection and child safety. The return of the refugees to Myanmar is unlikely in the short term. CRS is supporting Caritas Bangladesh to provide food assistance, shelter repair, water and sanitation, site development for settlements, and child protection activities.

**PHILIPPINES** Mount Mayon has been erupting since January 13, 2018, resulting in the evacuation of those within 6 miles of the volcano's summit. Close to 90,000 people have been affected. CRS is responding with water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) infrastructure, food and household items.

## LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

**MEXICO** Two earthquakes days apart killed nearly 500 people in September 2017, and destroyed homes, infrastructure and utilities. CRS is providing shelter, key living supplies, communal cooking facilities and counseling for families.

**THE CARIBBEAN** Hurricanes Irma and Maria resulted in loss of life, property and infrastructure in September 2017. Hundreds of thousands of people were displaced. CRS and our partners

are responding in Cuba and the Dominican Republic, Dominica and the British Virgin Islands.

**VENEZUELA** Political and economic instability are leaving people desperate for food, medical care and basic government services. Food prices have risen sharply, and an estimated 4 million people are eating only twice a day. CRS is supporting Caritas Venezuela to focus on the needs of the most vulnerable.

**'We once had food banks filled with stock, and now we have nothing—not even 20 pounds—to give people.'**

—Janeth Márquez  
Caritas Venezuela

## AFRICA

**LAKE CHAD BASIN** Now in its eighth year, the Lake Chad Basin crisis is estimated to have affected 10.9 million people in one of the world's poorest, most drought-prone regions. An estimated 7.23 million people do not have enough food, and 515,000 children are malnourished. CRS is responding across Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria with food, water, sanitation, shelter and livelihoods assistance.

**UGANDA** Ongoing violence between South Sudan's government and opposition forces has created the fastest growing refugee crisis in the world. More than 1 million South Sudanese have fled to neighboring Uganda, where resources are stretched. CRS is focusing on shelter and on water, sanitation and hygiene services for refugees and host communities.



Women and children uprooted by drought have built shelters outside Baidoa, in southwestern Somalia, and will receive aid from CRS partners. *Photo by Mohamed Sheikh Nor for CRS*

**SOMALIA** About 1 million Somalis have been forced from their homes by hunger and conflict, and an estimated 3.1 million people require emergency assistance, with 388,000 children in need of treatment for malnutrition. Priorities for CRS include providing food, water and medical assistance to prevent and treat malnutrition and communicable diseases.

**KENYA** Lack of water in the pastoral areas means food security is deteriorating. Below-average milk production and low livestock prices have resulted in household food shortages. More than 100,000 severely malnourished children are at risk of dying without immediate aid. CRS is helping with food and nutrition, and water, sanitation and hygiene efforts.

## EUROPE, THE MIDDLE EAST AND CENTRAL ASIA



Lila and her family came to Lebanon from Syria 4 years ago, and now live on the roof of a factory. She is learning English and French. *Photo by Ismail Ferdous for CRS*

**SYRIAN REFUGEE CRISIS** Many Syrian refugees across the Middle East have been displaced for several years and struggle with family separation, grief and finding how and where to live with stability and dignity. The toll on children is significant: Those 7 years old and younger have known only war. CRS, Caritas and local partners continue to expand support for them.

**EUROPE** Three years into Europe's refugee and migrant crisis, CRS and our partners continue to provide a range of programs across Greece, Serbia, Croatia, Macedonia and Bulgaria. Support ranges from meeting the urgent needs of newly arriving refugee families and vulnerable host communities, to helping thousands of longer-term refugees integrate and build new lives.



Vladislav Damyanov teaches a language class for displaced children at Caritas Bulgaria in Sofia. *Photo by Oscar Durand for CRS*

**IRAQ** The conflict has created widespread displacement and instability, resulting in a "protection crisis," according to the United Nations. Iraq's education system has been deeply affected: An estimated 1 in 4 schools have been destroyed, and many more are damaged. At least 5.1 million Iraqi children need humanitarian assistance. CRS and Caritas Iraq provide wide relief and ensure conflict-affected children can access quality formal education.



## BANGLADESH REFUGEE CRISIS

### OVERVIEW

Bangladesh is experiencing one of the worst humanitarian crises in its history because of the influx of hundreds of thousands of refugees from Myanmar. Between August 2017 and February 2018, escalating tension and violence in Myanmar's Rakhine State forced an estimated 688,000 Rohingya from their homes. They joined the more than 200,000 who had already fled. Their needs for the most basic human essentials are tremendous and include shelter, food, clean water, living supplies, protection and child safety. CRS is supporting Caritas Bangladesh to reach 360,000 people.

**'The house that we built for 5 years, bit by bit, was burned. When it went to ashes, that was our worst day.'**

—Zahura Khatun, Thangkhal camp

Families arrive hungry, exhausted and depleted of any resources, having spent significant funds to pay to cross the Naf River. In the crowded and unsanitary settlements, people are completely dependent on aid. More than half of the refugees are children. Most have experienced the trauma of seeing or experiencing abuse and violence. The return of Rohingya refugees to Myanmar seems unlikely in the short term. There is an urgent need to prepare for a protracted displacement as most refugees fear for their safety if they return. Without help, this crisis could further affect one of Bangladesh's poorest areas.

### WOMEN AND CHILDREN FACE ADDED RISKS

Child trafficking makes young people—especially girls, and unaccompanied or separated children—vulnerable. With poor or absent lighting, lack of privacy, limited clothing, and mixed bathing areas and latrines, women and girls face threats to their safety. More than 4,000 incidents of gender-based violence have been reported since August 2017.



Mohammed Karin helped carry his elderly neighbor across the Naf River from Myanmar as they fled their village. Photo by Mahmud Rahman for CRS/Caritas Bangladesh

### CRS RESPONSE

Supporting the efforts of Caritas Bangladesh, and closely involving the community in program discussions for greater efficiency and social cohesion, our emergency response priorities include:

#### Essential living supplies

Blankets, sleeping mats, kitchen sets and other supplies.

#### Camp improvement and disaster risk reduction

- Building key infrastructure and coordinating provision of basic services to improve safety, ease congestion and ensure durability.
- Improving sanitation and drainage.
- Teaching communities about disaster risk and how to plan for disaster resilience.

#### Safe shelter

- Helping improve the safety, dignity and resilience of shelters with input from local carpenters.
- Demonstrating disaster-resilient construction improvements.
- Supporting families that cannot build shelters themselves.
- Offering additional support to families with specific needs.

#### Water, sanitation and hygiene

- Constructing gender-segregated sanitation and bathing facilities.
- Installing 100 tube wells with solar-powered pumps.
- Training volunteers and developing messages to promote sanitation and hygiene.
- Facilitating the maintenance of water and sanitation infrastructure.
- Providing appropriate female hygiene solutions.
- Distributing 10,000 hygiene kits.

#### Protecting women and children from trafficking and violence

- Sharing protection and anti-trafficking messaging.
- Training community members to counsel and provide referrals for more advanced counseling.
- Enhancing or creating new child friendly spaces, enabling children to play and learn safely.

## PHILIPPINES

## VOLCANIC ERUPTION

## CONTEXT

The Mount Mayon volcano in Legazpi City, in the northeastern province of Albay, erupted on January 13, 2018. Over the next 2 weeks, eruptions increased and intensified. The national volcanology institute warns that a dangerous eruption is imminent. The danger zone includes a 6-mile radius from the volcano's summit. People have been evacuated, schools closed and flights into the region canceled. A state of calamity has been declared.

According to the country's national disaster council, close to 23,000 families, or 90,000 people, have been affected in 59 villages, across 9 cities and municipalities in Albay. Of those affected, 18,000 families are being served in 74 evacuation centers outside the danger zone. Agricultural livelihoods have been damaged. As seismic activity increases and volcanic ash continues to fall, families' needs are becoming more urgent.



The reach of lava flowing from Mount Mayon into the surrounding municipalities.

Diagram courtesy of OCHA



After a series of volcanic eruptions, Philippine authorities declared a danger zone within a 6-mile radius of Mount Mayon's summit. Photo by CRS staff

CRS and our local partner conducted a rapid assessment of evacuation centers to identify the most vulnerable people. We found that centers in local schools were housing up to 150 people per classroom. Many people were sleeping outside or in chairs. The overcrowding puts significant pressure on the water supply and latrines. Local churches are encouraging volunteer families to host evacuees.

During the day, many men travel back to their homes in the danger zone so they can tend livestock and maintain their livelihoods. Some evacuees have received local government food supplies, but many

reported that distributions were irregular and not enough to feed their families for more than 2 days.

Temporary learning spaces are needed, so that children can continue their schooling.



A crowded evacuation center in Daraga.

Photo by CRS staff

## CRS RESPONSE

CRS is responding to the most immediate needs of families in selected evacuation centers:

- Constructing new and rehabilitating existing water and sanitation infrastructure—including latrines, bathing cubicles and hand-washing areas—cleaning septic tanks, and providing cleaning materials and information.
- Supporting the local Diocese Social Action Center to formalize and implement the host-family program.
- Providing sleeping mats, mosquito nets and other household items.



## MEXICO

## EARTHQUAKES



A collapsed building in the Lindavista neighborhood of Mexico City. Photo by Benedicte Desrus/Alamy Live News

## CONTEXT

The 8.2-magnitude earthquake that struck southern Mexico on September 7, 2017, caused nearly 100 deaths and damaged 110,000 buildings in Oaxaca and Chiapas. It was followed just 11 days later by a 7.1-magnitude earthquake that destroyed buildings across Mexico City, killing 220 people in the city and 140 in surrounding states.

The earthquakes caused structural damage to homes and other buildings, to bridges, roads, water supplies and the electrical grid. More than 7,000 aftershocks worsened the damage.

In Oaxaca, about 800,000 people were affected across 115 municipalities. Dozens of small towns suffered severe damage, and ongoing heavy rain worsened conditions. Catholic dioceses reported that up to 50 percent of homes had collapsed. Water systems in many communities were damaged or destroyed, and sanitation facilities were lost. Many small, isolated towns reported electricity outages and no running water.

Families, particularly children, were traumatized. Communities needed food, clothing, kitchen sets and hygiene kits.

## CRS RESPONSE

CRS and our local partners worked with the Mexican government and other relief agencies to ensure a coordinated and efficient response. In Oaxaca, Chiapas and Morelos, the response by CRS, Caritas Mexico, Tehuantepec Diocese and the Missionaries of Jesus Christ Resurrected has included:

- Constructing 30 transitional shelters for extremely vulnerable families.
- Distributing tarps to 2,859 families.
- Setting up 15 communal cooking facilities to ensure daily hot meals.
- Providing key living supplies, including 570 kitchen sets and 67 locally made clay ovens. Another 53 ovens will be distributed.
- Arranging counseling for 1,040 children and young people dealing with grief, distress and trauma.

CRS is working to provide another 125 transitional shelters for vulnerable families, toilet repair for 70 families, and community hygiene and health promotion. CRS will train people to build back better using disaster-resilient construction techniques, and to maintain their shelters. In four communities, community-based disaster response teams are being trained in first aid.

**In Oaxaca, dozens of small towns suffered severe damage, and ongoing heavy rain worsened conditions. Up to 50 percent of homes collapsed, and water and sanitation systems were damaged or destroyed.**



## THE CARIBBEAN

## HURRICANES IRMA AND MARIA

## CONTEXT

Catastrophic Category 5 Hurricane Irma claimed at least 34 lives and affected half a million people across the Caribbean in early September 2017. It made landfall on the Leeward Islands, and then again on the northern coast of Cuba, before turning toward Florida.

Most of the deaths and severe damage took place on Antigua and Barbuda, Anguilla, Saint Martin and Saint Barthelemy in the Leeward Islands, and in Cuba, where nearly every region experienced some damage. In the British Virgin Islands, at least 6,300 people were displaced, with 25 percent of homes reportedly uninhabitable. A third of the population was left jobless.

# 500,000

**PEOPLE ACROSS THE CARIBBEAN WERE AFFECTED BY HURRICANE IRMA**

Ten days later, Hurricane Maria made landfall on Dominica as a Category 5 storm, with winds of up to 160 mph. The whole island was affected by flooding and dozens of landslides, and 38 people died. Road access is improving, but several communities in the southeast are still cut off.

Although the Dominican Republic was not hit directly by Hurricane Maria, homes were destroyed and many areas experienced severe flooding.



Hurricane Maria caused flooding and dozens of landslides across the island of Dominica. Photo by Manuel Jean-Francois/Alamy

## CRS RESPONSE

**Cuba:** Priority needs include house repair, living and hygiene supplies, and clothing. Caritas Havana has responded with food and household supplies for 400 families, and has supported

2,720 families with food, water and hygiene kits in Camaguey, Ciego de Avila and Santa Clara. CRS will help Caritas Cuba provide roofing and mattresses to 150 families in those three locations.

**British Virgin Islands:** CRS is responding with cash payments to help 740 families buy essentials. CRS, Caritas Antilles and the British Red Cross set up a joint cash program, approved by the government as part of its household assistance program.

More than 50 social workers were trained and deployed to more than 15 stations around the country. People were reached through door-to-door visits, via radio, or through other community outreach to vulnerable households.

**Dominica:** Caritas Dominica evaluated the needs of 750 damaged or destroyed homes for community-led shelter repair and reconstruction. Hygiene promoters have been trained in key messages and tools, and are now visiting homes and communities to share the information with 5,000 people. CRS and our partner, Caritas Antilles, have distributed 750 hygiene kits, 1,590 tarps,

920 buckets and 660 water filters to more than 600 families in 4 communities in the hardest-hit southeastern region. Hygiene kits include soap, tubs, sanitary kits for women, folding jerry cans, detergent, sarongs, whistles and solar lights. Community feedback mechanisms have been put in place using text messages and WhatsApp, so vulnerable families are not overlooked.

**Dominican Republic:** CRS partners have provided 1,970 families with vouchers for food, hygiene and living supplies, and 330 families with hygiene kits. Caritas has mobilized volunteers to assist with

distributions across the dioceses. Because the danger of waterborne diseases and other health risks remains high, teams are working with the local health ministry to raise awareness about health and hygiene.



## VENEZUELA

## POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CRISIS



In cities like Caracas, food and medicine are in short supply—and lines are long. Photo by Andrea Hernandez/CrowdSpark/Alamy

## CONTEXT

Political and economic instability have left Venezuelans without access to food, medical care or basic government services. More than 2 million people have fled the country, and tens of thousands have been killed since 2016.

The annual inflation rate was estimated to be over 2,000 percent in 2017, and is expected to continue rising in 2018, according to the International Monetary Fund. Food prices have increased by 650 percent, and an estimated 4 million people eat only twice a day. More than 80 percent of Venezuelans are living in poverty, and as many as 68 percent of families have resorted to survival strategies like searching through refuse, foraging and even prostitution.

Families spend almost 5 hours a week standing in line to buy food. Children are missing school, and adults are missing work. In response to food shortages, riots have escalated in size and frequency. A growing number of hospitals, schools and universities, and jails and social service institutions are without food.

Venezuela's public health services have collapsed. Hospitals are suffering from shortages of staff,

essential medicines, equipment and supplies. The widespread medicine shortage has resulted in outbreaks of diseases thought to have been eradicated, including malaria, diphtheria and tuberculosis. Food shortages mean high rates of malnutrition pose significant risks.

Finding potable water is a challenge. In places where public water systems exist, the Venezuelan government cuts off water for days. Rural families struggle to find chlorine to treat their water. Electricity is also unreliable, with almost daily blackouts.

## CRS RESPONSE

CRS and Caritas Venezuela are focusing on the needs of the most vulnerable—children, pregnant women, people with disabilities and the elderly—aiming to reach 2,200 families, or 11,000 people, over 18 months with:

### Primary health care

- Access to basic health care, including checkups for children.
- Regular immunizations for children under age 2, treatment of common childhood diseases and chronic diseases, and regular prenatal care.
- Nutritional supplements and special meals for malnourished children.
- Donated medical supplies to health care facilities.
- Hygiene kits, mosquito nets and water purification supplies.

### Community meals

Caritas is distributing food to pregnant women and children under age 5. It complements what people receive from the local government.

CRS will support Caritas to:

- Establish weekly soup kitchens across a network of 365 parishes.
- Provide training in nutritional cooking.
- Offer counseling to families who attend the communal meals.

### Capacity building for partners

- Provide capacity strengthening and continued support to partner staff in supply chain management, monitoring and evaluation, and using technology to monitor program outcomes.
- Support Caritas Venezuela with transportation, communications, administration and logistics to expand its response in the most vulnerable areas.



## UGANDA DISPLACEMENT

South Sudanese refugee children in Arua, northwestern Uganda. Photo by Joerg Boethling/Alamy

### CONTEXT

The South Sudan refugee crisis is the fastest growing in the world. Uganda, its southern neighbor, now hosts more than 1 million South Sudanese refugees fleeing the ongoing violence between their country's government and opposition forces. Most of the refugees are women and children.

Uganda grants refugees freedom of movement and the right to work and establish businesses. They also receive land to build shelter and grow food. But Uganda's resources are stretched.

Bidi Bidi camp has received more than 287,000 South Sudanese refugees, making it the world's largest refugee settlement. The huge influx of refugees has led to land scarcity and tension with host communities. Bidi Bidi is now closed to new arrivals but faces challenges of health, sanitation, shelter and livelihoods.

### CRS RESPONSE

CRS is expanding our WASH and shelter interventions and, following Ugandan government guidance, we are focusing 70 percent of our activities on refugees and 30 percent on vulnerable host community members.

#### Shelter

CRS is building 725 semipermanent shelters in Yangani and Ombechi, in Bidi Bidi camp. We are providing tools and construction materials, as well as technical assistance to ensure homes are built using disaster-resilient techniques.

#### Livelihoods

Twenty-five people were trained in starting and maintaining savings and lending groups.

#### Water

Construction of a new borehole to serve an estimated 4,000 people is underway, and drilling and pump testing have been completed.

#### Hygiene and sanitation

- Over 200 households have benefited from CRS latrine construction, including child heads of households, the elderly, and people with disabilities or chronic illness.
- Some 6,950 people were trained in health and hygiene practices.
- Youths decommissioned 30 latrines.
- 10 waste-disposal pits were dug and fenced, benefiting 100 households. Information boards on using these pits have been installed at 28 sites.

### BEFORE AND AFTER



A family moves from an improvised shelter to a new CRS shelter. Photos by Wafuta Festo/CRS





In Somalia, some 388,000 children need treatment for malnutrition.  
Photo by Mohamed Sheikh Nor for CRS

## KENYA CONTEXT

Drought in the arid and semi-arid lands of Kenya remains dire. In the pastoral areas, food security is deteriorating further. Below-average milk production and low livestock prices have resulted in household food shortages. Last year, the short rains came late and ended early in most parts of the country. The drier than normal conditions have caused atypical livestock migration, leading to conflict over resources.

The country is also battling cholera and dengue fever outbreaks, with more than 3,900 and 1,500 cases respectively in the last year. More than 100,000 children are severely malnourished and at risk of dying without immediate aid. In Turkana alone, the rates of severe acute malnutrition—the most life-threatening form of hunger—are up nearly fourfold in just a year. Nearly 40,000 pregnant and nursing women are malnourished.

## CRS RESPONSE

CRS is responding to the drought in five counties—Kwale, Kilifi, Turkana, Isiolo and Samburu—by supporting access to water for households and livestock, hygiene promotion, improved livestock health and livelihood recovery efforts. The project is being implemented through our local Church partners and the county governments. We expect to reach 15,500 families. Completed and ongoing support includes:

- Reached 7,000 people with hygiene support, which involved training 100 community leaders and sharing radio messages, posters and other communication materials. Hygiene promotion is ongoing.
- Distributed hygiene kits and water purification tablets to 2,150 households, including 1,810 female-headed homes, reaching 12,900 people.
- Repaired and maintained water infrastructure for 1,500 families.
- Some 6,250 drought-affected households accessed water through the rehabilitation of 4 community boreholes and the development of a new shallow well in the Turkana and Isiolo counties of Northern Kenya.
- Helped communities repair and rehabilitate rainwater collection points and install underground storage tanks.
- Bought and distributed high-quality feed to 5,600 livestock farmers in 5 counties.
- Reached 6,799 farmers through seed fairs.
- Reached 1,621 households with livestock restocking (6,543 goats and sheep).
- Began plans to support farmers with small-scale irrigation systems; water system rehabilitation includes plans for livestock watering points.
- Provided veterinary care to 26,073 animals.

## KENYA AND SOMALIA

### HUNGER AND DISEASE

## SOMALIA CONTEXT

Food, water and help to prevent and treat malnutrition and communicable diseases are the priorities in Somalia, where three consecutive below-average rainy seasons have resulted in persistent drought. About 1 million Somalis have been forced from their homes by hunger and conflict, and an estimated 3.1 million people require emergency assistance, with 388,000 children in need of treatment for malnutrition.

A lack of clean water has led to a severe cholera outbreak, which peaked at more than 75,000 reported cases, many of them fatal. Clean water, sanitation and hygiene support are vital.

Uprooted communities continue to arrive in urban centers. CRS has focused its efforts on an area outside Mogadishu called the Afgooye corridor, where there are huge informal displacement camps. They serve people fleeing conflict in their communities or searching for help after the loss of their livestock or crops because of drought. Many families brought only what they could carry when they fled on foot.

## CRS RESPONSE

CRS is providing the following support:

- Treatment of acutely malnourished children and pregnant women; malnourishment prevention through sensitization on child feeding and hygiene; and community-based screening and referral.
- Drinking water; hygiene kits that include soap and detergent; utensils; water storage containers; living supplies and vouchers for supplies.
- Campaigns to teach hygiene.
- Food assistance for 9,000 families through grants via mobile money.
- Mobile clinics and training for community health workers to treat acute malnutrition, and prevent and treat communicable diseases.
- Cash-for-work opportunities.
- Crisis centers to help survivors of gender-based violence.

## LAKE CHAD BASIN

## DISPLACEMENT

## CONTEXT

Now in its eighth year, the Lake Chad Basin crisis is estimated to have affected 10.9 million people in one of the world's poorest, most drought-prone regions. Across Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria, Boko Haram has killed thousands of people, and 2.26 million have fled their homes. In October 2017, there were 538 conflict-related deaths. An estimated 7.23 million people do not have enough food, and 515,000 children are malnourished.

## CRS RESPONSE

CRS continues to respond across all four countries, and has supported more than 300,000 people from displaced, returnee and host communities. As part of our strategies in [Nigeria](#) and across [the region](#), CRS and our partners are prioritizing monthly food e-vouchers, cash-for-work opportunities and cash grants. Agricultural and livestock support helps people recover their livelihoods and rebuild the local economy. CRS helps in the construction of boreholes for potable water, and supports critical sanitation and hygiene activities and supplies.

Activities from July to December 2017 included the following:

## CAMEROON

- Supported 3,000 people through cash distributions to meet needs for food, health care, livestock, agriculture and education. Supported 353 families through e-vouchers.
- Trained 800 people in post-harvest storage techniques.
- Involved 900 people in cash-for-work activities reconstructing rural roads, ponds and dams.

## CHAD

- Supported 1,030 families with food through voucher fairs.



An improvised shelter is constructed in Maiduguri, Northeast Nigeria. Displaced families often arrive in host communities with no assets and spend months in leaky, unstable makeshift shelters. Photo by Dooshima Tsee for CRS

## NIGER

## Food and living supplies

- Provided about 495 tons of food to 1,200 people across 10 villages.
- Provided living supplies for 1,500 people through voucher fairs.
- Distributed hygiene kits to 3,250 women and girls.

## Agriculture and livelihoods

- Involved 1,620 families in cash-for-work programs.
- Helped 500 women across 20 villages participate in livestock fairs. An additional 500 women will receive goats for breeding.
- Chose 5 locations for livestock fairs.

## NIGERIA

CRS published [a case study](#) on the use of electronic vouchers in Nigeria, identifying best practices, lessons learned and recommendations.

## Food assistance and nutrition

- Provided 125,220 people in 19,180 households with e-vouchers to buy food from local vendors.
- Injected \$5.1 million into the local economy through vouchers redeemed at local vendors.
- Screened 13,800 children under age 5 for malnutrition, including 1,160 who suffer from severe acute malnutrition and were referred to clinics.
- Educated 45,130 caregivers on proper child feeding, and counseled them in hygiene.

## Social cohesion

Trained 635 participants in social cohesion, trauma healing, and agriculture and business skills.

## Shelter and household items

- Distributed 844 emergency shelter kits, constructed 150 transitional shelters and repaired 185 buildings in exchange for rental subsidies.
- Distributed e-vouchers to help 3,190 families buy living supplies.
- Trained 228 people in fire safety.

## Water, sanitation and hygiene

- Rehabilitated or constructed 8 solar-powered water points and 6 hand pumps.
- Constructed 485 latrines, 593 bathing stations and 100 hand-washing stations.
- Provided 4,950 families with water treatment supplies and messaging, and educated 322,360 people on safe hygiene practices.
- Organized 24 cleanup events involving 4,200 people.
- Distributed 236 latrine cleaning kits to community-led committees, and 880 motivational kits to mobilize community cleanups.
- Provided 9 environmental sanitation kits to committees.

## Agriculture

- Organized 6,190 farmers into 249 groups for training on crop production, seed storage and post-harvest handling, and provided supplies for the 2017 farming season.
- Established 45 demonstration farms across Yobe and Borno.
- Involved 20 farmers in pilot seed multiplication in Jere and Kaga local government areas.
- Involved 24 farmers in pilot rainwater harvesting technologies.



## CONTEXT

As the Syrian conflict continues well into its seventh year, the dangers facing families and civilians are devastating. In mid-January, 13 Syrians, including children, died in freezing temperatures as they tried to cross into Lebanon. A United Nations representative said their deaths “illustrated the desperation of those trying to reach safety ... and remind us that the situation inside Syria remains very difficult, and that people continue to take huge risks to cross to safety.”

CRS, Caritas and local partners continue to expand support for Syrian refugees across the Middle East. Many have been displaced for several years and struggle with family separation, grief and finding how and where to live with stability and dignity. The toll on children is significant: Those 7 years old and younger have known only war. Millions have lived in a chronic state of fear and uncertainty. The long-term impacts on their personal well-being, and that of Syria’s future generations, are critical.

## CRS RESPONSE

CRS has helped more than 1.4 million Syrians across the Middle East and Europe. We work closely with the Catholic Church, especially Caritas and our Church partners, who have deep roots in the region.



## SYRIAN REFUGEE CRISIS

### DISPLACEMENT

Lila, left, and her family came to Lebanon from Syria 4 years ago seeking safety, and now live on the roof of a factory. CRS partners with Caritas Lebanon to provide holistic support to refugees with disabilities in Lebanon. *Photo by Ismail Ferdous for CRS*

Together, we provide the following assistance:

#### Shelter and rent assistance

Monthly rent stipends support most refugees who live in urban areas. With few opportunities to earn income, this helps prevent homelessness, squatting and destitution.

#### Living supplies

Relief kits of bedding, stoves, buckets and other household items are provided to newly arriving refugees.

#### Children’s education, support and trauma counseling

Services include tutoring, recreational activities and trauma counseling.

#### Food

Cash and voucher programs allow people to buy the food they need, respecting their dignity and supporting the local economy.

#### Medical assistance

This includes immediate care for life-threatening injuries, care for chronic conditions such as diabetes, and maternal and child care.

#### Hygiene and sanitation

Vouchers for soap, laundry detergent, diapers and other sanitary supplies are provided.

## SPOTLIGHT: IMPACT OF EDUCATION AND COUNSELING FOR SYRIAN REFUGEES

In **Jordan**, CRS and Caritas Jordan support Syrian refugee children at high risk of dropping out of school. We help children to enroll and thrive in formal schools, and provide counseling to help them cope. The program also supports parochial schools by ensuring infrastructure is safe, and that teachers and staff are trained to identify and manage the challenges faced by refugee children and their families. We also conduct parent engagement, parent literacy and numeracy activities, and life skills courses for adolescents. During the 2016 school year, the program achieved these results among participating refugee students:

- 99% passed their year-end exam and graduated to the next grade.
- 87% reported less bullying and felt better integrated into school.
- 71% reported decreased anxiety after participating in therapy.

In **Lebanon**, CRS and Caritas Lebanon launched a pilot program for Syrian refugee children with disabilities that will soon expand to reach 250 families across Mount Lebanon and the Bekaa Valley.

**‘Our psychologist plays a big role in our lives in providing comfort and support.’**

—Ahmad Ali  
Father of a child with disabilities

Here are some highlights:

- Until CRS and Caritas intervened, most of the children had never been medically diagnosed, so parents did not know the medical implications of their children’s disabilities or how to support them.
- Physical therapists provided support to children and taught parents and other family members home therapy techniques.
- Parents formed a support group and are regularly communicating and helping each other.
- Since a large number of fathers are the primary caregivers, CRS and Caritas helped create a special support group for them.

## EUROPE

## REFUGEE AND MIGRANT CRISIS

## CONTEXT

The number of refugees arriving by sea in Europe dropped to 157,500 in 2017, from a peak of more than 1 million in 2015. This was largely because of the EU-Turkey Statement to reduce “irregular” crossings from Turkey to Greece, and the closure of the Republic of Macedonia border, which left nearly 60,000 refugees stranded in Greece. Most are from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq, and more than half are women and children. Stranded and without proper shelter, they are vulnerable to exploitation, poverty and hunger. CRS and our local partners have assisted more than 400,000 refugees and migrants across Greece, Serbia, Macedonia, Croatia and Bulgaria, where we are also helping other vulnerable groups. We are prioritizing support for displaced families as they transition into communities where they can become self-sufficient.

CRS RESPONSE  
GREECE

In the midst of its worst economic crisis in history, Greece has an estimated 48,660 asylum seekers and refugees. In response, CRS and Caritas provide a holistic, integrated strategy to help refugees and migrants become economically self-sufficient and active members of society. Our support includes:

**Integration into society**

CRS and Caritas teams help refugees and migrants to access the labor market and secure paid employment. We also help refugees obtain documents and job-readiness skills, and link them with potential employers. Social networks are strengthened through a program that pairs refugees with host community members in “buddy” programs. Language classes and job-readiness support can significantly increase refugees’ chances to succeed.



Caritas Sofia provides vouchers to help vulnerable refugee women and families buy food and living supplies. Photo by Oscar Durand for CRS

## BULGARIA

Many asylum seekers traveled through Bulgaria on their way to Western Europe. But, when the Serbian border was closed in 2016, most refugees and migrants had no option but to stay in Bulgaria, with little government or other support. Once refugee status is granted, people have 2 weeks to leave the camps, and after that services for them are limited. CRS and Caritas are providing them with economic and social resources to integrate into society. Programs include enrolling refugees in assisted job searches, Bulgarian language classes and training to manage household expenses.

**Cash assistance for food and living supplies**

Some 17,500 refugees, migrants and asylum seekers have been supported with monthly grants to buy critical food and living supplies. Prepaid debit cards are safe and offer privacy. CRS and Caritas have provided \$11 million in cash grants.

**Transitional shelter**

Safe, dignified housing has been provided for more than 3,000 people by rehabilitating and furnishing vacant or underused apartments in Athens

and Thessaloniki. Once families move into transitional shelters, they receive support from trained professionals, including referrals to medical, legal and children’s education services.

**Urban social centers**

In Athens, CRS and Caritas manage two service hubs that provide hot meals, child friendly spaces, shower facilities, access to social workers and translators, referrals to medical services, rest areas and internet access. About 600 people use these centers daily.

## UKRAINE

## VIOLENCE AND DISPLACEMENT

In the government-controlled parts of the Donetsk region, loss of livelihoods, rising prices and difficulty accessing markets make food security a year-round challenge for many internally displaced people and local residents. To improve food security and agricultural livelihoods, CRS and Caritas Ukraine distribute cash grants and offer technical assistance to vulnerable families for small-scale farming activities, including fruit and vegetable cultivation, and animal husbandry. CRS and Caritas Ukraine have already provided grants to 325 families and agriculture training to 357 people. All grant recipients have begun their agricultural activities, and 63 percent report reduced food expenses, 56 percent have grown enough surplus to provide added income, and 96 percent plan to continue their agricultural activities in 2018.



## IRAQ DISPLACEMENT

### CONTEXT

The past 3 years of armed conflict have created widespread displacement and instability, and destroyed infrastructure, resulting in a “protection crisis,” according to the United Nations. Iraq’s education system has been deeply affected: An estimated 1 in 4 schools have been destroyed, and many more are damaged. At least 5.1 million Iraqi children need humanitarian assistance.

The safety and dignity of families returning to areas retaken from ISIS will also require mine removal, significant investment in infrastructure, and the rebuilding of local economies. People have endured torture and abuse, and are grieving. They need counseling to help them heal.

### CRS RESPONSE

With 70 staff, primarily Iraqi, CRS has partnered with Caritas Iraq to help 300,000 people with a range of support. CRS and Caritas programming in Dohuk, Baghdad and Anbar is ongoing, including the provision of critical relief items, shelter, water and sanitation supplies, and education and counseling support for displaced children.

A critical component of CRS programming in Iraq is to ensure conflict-affected children can access quality formal education while they are displaced as well as after they return home.



Sam, left, and his family were forced to leave their home in northern Iraq. He now attends a CRS-sponsored school where he and his classmates can continue their studies and receive trauma counseling. Photo by Philip Laubner/CRS

### PRIORITIES

**Shelter** This includes upgrading unfinished buildings where families have taken refuge, to increase protection from winter cold, and for safety and privacy. Improvements include installing external doors and double-glazed windows, and internal partitions and doors, as well as weatherproofing. To date, CRS has upgraded more than 5,000 buildings, supporting over 70,000 people in Baghdad, Kirkuk and Dohuk. CRS and Caritas have also designed and provided transitional shelter, using local materials and labor, for more than 500 families stranded in the desolate Amiriyat al-Fallujah settlement.

**Support for returnees** After a successful pilot, CRS and Caritas are preparing to scale up support to internally displaced families returning to their homes. Support will include repair of war-damaged homes for 2,000 people. CRS and Caritas are weatherproofing and making structural improvements to housing for displaced families in Baghdad.

**Essential living and hygiene supplies** Critical relief items were distributed in Haj Ali Camp on the outskirts of Mosul in October, serving 3,500 recently displaced people. CRS and Caritas Iraq provided critical winter relief items for 7,000 displaced families

in Anbar, Nineveh, Dohuk and Kirkuk. These included kitchen sets, bedding, soap, stoves and other supplies. The extreme temperatures require specific support—including extra blankets, warm clothing, heaters and kerosene. Supplies are either provided directly or, where markets are functioning, through vouchers or cash assistance.

**Preparedness and scale-up** CRS and Caritas Iraq teams continue to train staff and prepare supplies and vendors for the anticipated influx of newly displaced communities. CRS is also supporting Caritas Iraq with the assessment and design of Caritas programming on the Nineveh Plains. CRS support for the Caritas Women and Child Project is also ongoing.

**Education** CRS and Caritas have recently launched the latest phase of the education and psychosocial project, serving 8,000 students in 13 schools. This has recently expanded to Baghdad and now covers additional schools in Dohuk, Kirkuk and Nineveh provinces. In Nineveh, CRS is working with the Department of Education and local authorities to identify schools that need support to achieve international education standards. Schools need repairs to provide safe learning environments, and children need social and emotional support to continue their education.