

February 2016

GLOBAL EMERGENCY UPDATE

This update provides the latest reports from Catholic Relief Services teams and partners carrying out vital emergency relief and recovery efforts 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.



CRS partner Caritas Athens runs a day center for refugees and migrants. Part of their outreach is to meet arriving refugees at the port to keep them from being exploited by smugglers. Here a group of Afghan girls arrives in Athens.

Photo by Elie Gardner for CRS

EUROPE + THE MIDDLE EAST

The Europe refugee and migrant crisis continues to grow, with increasing numbers fleeing their countries—primarily **SYRIA**, **AFGHANISTAN** and **IRAQ**. CRS is providing comprehensive emergency relief to hundreds of thousands of uprooted people. We are helping partners in countries struggling to respond and have supported 235,000 people in **GREECE**, **MACEDONIA**, **CROATIA** and **SERBIA**.

In the Middle East, ongoing conflicts in Syria and Iraq have forced millions from their homes and even countries. On February 11, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and his Russian counterpart agreed to deliver vital humanitarian assistance to devastated Syrian cities.

AFRICA

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

A second round of presidential elections will take place in late February. It is hoped that they will be peaceful and bring about long-needed stability. CRS teams and partners continue to provide relief to thousands of people enduring one of the world's most deadly conflicts, which has devastated the country and claimed more than 5,000 lives.

ETHIOPIA The fear of a severe food crisis looms in Ethiopia after two failed rainy seasons have decimated harvests, leading to food shortages and to weakening or dying livestock. CRS is providing critical seeds for the current planting season, cash-for-work opportunities, and feed and vaccinations for livestock. In coordination with the government, CRS has also increased assistance, and will be supporting 2.2 million people.

WEST AFRICA Just 24 hours after the World Health Organization declared in January that the Ebola outbreak was over, new cases were confirmed in Sierra Leone. CRS continues to build on our work, which improved health systems in the most-affected countries, and to support community recovery.

NIGERIA At least 2.1 million people have fled their homes in fear of the militant group Boko Haram, which has carried out attacks in the northeast, killing more than 13,000 people. CRS is providing food, health care, nutrition, hygiene supplies and other support to uprooted and vulnerable families and communities.

MALI People are struggling to recover from internal conflict and drought that have depleted the country's scarce resources. CRS is responding with crop and livestock support, forming savings groups and providing living supplies.

SOUTHERN AFRICA The El Niño cycle has affected weather patterns across Southern Africa, leading to drought-like conditions and food shortages in Angola, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe. CRS is preparing agricultural activities, disaster risk reduction efforts, and integrated watershed and natural resource management to boost resilience.

LATIN AMERICA + THE CARRIBEAN

COSTA RICA The Costa Rican government is struggling to support 7,000 Cubans living in shelters who need food and living supplies. An estimated 40,000 Cubans have migrated to Costa Rica over a period of years, mainly via Ecuador, in an effort to reach the United States. Following President Obama's declaration that, under the Cuban Adjustment Act, Cubans may enter the United States—and receive migrant benefits—this migration has accelerated.

EUROPE

REFUGEE CRISIS



Zaynab Ahmad—of Aleppo, Syria—holds her week-old baby, Layla, at a camp in Tabanovce, Macedonia, near the border with Serbia. She is hoping to continue to Holland soon with her husband and their other children. *Photo by Elie Gardner for CRS*

CONTEXT

The refugee crisis continues to grow, with increasing numbers of refugees fleeing Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq and other countries. The number of refugees and migrants in Europe surpassed 1 million in December 2015, 70 percent having arrived in Greece. Every day, 2,000 to 5,000 people make the arduous journey from Greece northward.

With the colder winter temperatures, the sea route most refugees take from Turkey to Greece is increasingly perilous. Yet refugees continue risking their lives to reach safe havens. In 2015, some 2,000 Syrians drowned in the Mediterranean, attempting to reach Europe. Others have become victims of trafficking, abuse, or both. Some spend their life's savings or take on massive debt for a new start. Refugee families need food, water, sanitation, protection from the elements and legal advice.

This situation is fluid, requiring social service agencies to adapt quickly. Since mid-November, more countries have closed their borders to refugees and migrants. Other countries are allowing only Afghans, Syrians and Iraqis to enter and pass through. Refugees and migrants who are not permitted to travel farther north are staying in Greece and evaluating their options, which include voluntary repatriation through the International Organization for Migration, applying for asylum in Greece or other European Union countries, staying in Greece beyond a 30-day allowance, or trying to travel on their own, often a dangerous option.

SPOTLIGHT

CNN highlighted the [accommodation provided](#) by Caritas Greece on the island of Lesbos, where many refugees arrive.

235,000+

REFUGEES HAVE BEEN SUPPORTED WITH FOOD AND EMERGENCY LIVING SUPPLIES, MEDICAL HELP AND LEGAL ADVICE

CRS RESPONSE

CRS and our partners in Greece, Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia, Albania and Germany are providing thousands of refugees with food, clothing, sanitation and temporary shelter. We have also provided legal and interpretation services to help refugees make informed decisions. Our support helps those who are most vulnerable—typically women, children and the elderly. In addition to offering refugees services along their main migration route, CRS is preparing partners to respond in Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania and Bulgaria, in case more borders close and the migration route changes.



A father and daughter at a transit point in northern Serbia, where CRS provides medical and translation assistance, and supplies. *Photo by Kira Horvath for CRS*

On February 12, the U.S. Embassy asked CRS to assist a delegation of U.S. senators, including John McCain, during their visit to Serbia to learn about the crisis and the government and nongovernmental humanitarian response.

CRS has supported more than 235,000 refugees with the following assistance:

- **Food and emergency living supplies** Sleeping bags, mats, hygiene kits, food rations, hot meals and clean water.
- **Medical assistance** Doctors treat hundreds of refugees daily.
- **Temporary shelter** Refugees sleep in public places like parks, forests and abandoned factories. In Greece and Serbia, CRS and our partners have provided several large structures where refugees can have a hot meal, access basic toilet and shower facilities, and receive counseling and medical assistance.
- **Information, translation and legal resources** Families learn which services and options are available at key transit points, and can make informed decisions.

SYRIA

REFUGEE CRISIS



A Jordanian teacher with CRS partner Caritas Jordan helps a Syrian girl at the Zarqa Caritas Center, in Zarqa, Jordan. The classrooms offer informal education, as well as stability, safety, and counseling for issues of trauma and grief. *Photo by Andrew McConnell for CRS*

CONTEXT

March will mark 5 years since the start of the deadly civil war in Syria. The conflict has claimed at least 250,000 lives. More than 11 million people—half of Syria’s population—have had to flee their homes. At least 7 million have been displaced within their country, and 4 million have left Syria. Many Syrian children have grown up knowing only war.

Intensified fighting in and around the Syrian city of Aleppo in early February caused tens of thousands of Syrians to flee to the country’s Bab al-Salam border crossing. It is expected that thousands of new refugees will make their way across the Turkish border into the southern city of Kilis. In anticipation, CRS is coordinating with the Turkish government to respond to their immediate needs.

On February 11, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and his Russian counterpart, Sergei Lavrov, agreed to deliver vital humanitarian assistance to devastated Syrian cities, after a meeting with key regional powers in Munich. The aid is supposed to be followed by a nationwide cessation of hostilities that would potentially clear the way for renewed U.N. peace talks, which were temporarily suspended in early February.

The humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate. Countries like Jordan and Lebanon, which are hosting refugees, are at breaking point. Half of all Syrian refugees are children, and most have been out of school for much of their childhoods. Neighboring countries bear a heavy burden as their economies, societies and infrastructure struggle to absorb millions of refugees.

A growing number of Iraqi refugees are flowing into the same areas, and also need help. In early February, world leaders met in London for a conference aimed at raising \$10 billion for Syrian refugees. They want to help prevent the creation of a permanent underclass of uneducated, restless and jobless Syrians living in countries bordering their homeland. The organizers want to divert efforts away from food assistance toward work and education opportunities in Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan.

825,000+

SYRIANS HAVE BEEN HELPED BY CRS AND ITS PARTNERS SINCE THE WAR BEGAN

CRS RESPONSE

The Catholic Church and its social service agencies, including Caritas, have deep roots in the region. This network of staff and operations allows CRS to help people quickly and efficiently, with the trust of local communities. CRS has helped more than 825,000 Syrians since the war began. In Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt and Turkey, we have provided Syrian refugees with medical services and livelihoods support, and formal education, counseling and recreational programs for children. Priority assistance—including immediate and long-term needs—includes:

- **Shelter and rent assistance** Monthly rent stipends help support the majority of refugees who live in urban areas. With few options for refugees to work or earn an income, the stipends help prevent homelessness, squatting and destitution.
- **Children’s education, support and trauma counseling** CRS is supporting education, tutoring, recreational activities and trauma counseling for children.
- **Living supplies** Prepackaged relief kits equip new arrivals with bedding, stoves, buckets and other items.
- **Food** CRS supports cash and voucher programs so people can buy what they need. Giving families choices respects their human dignity and helps support the local economy.
- **Medical assistance** This includes immediate care for life-threatening wounds, care for chronic conditions like diabetes, and maternal and child care.
- **Hygiene and sanitation** CRS and our partners are providing vouchers for soap, laundry detergent, diapers and other sanitary supplies to keep families healthy.

IRAQ

CONFLICT



Seham Salih, center, a mother of two from Mosul, and Sakina Osman, her mother-in-law, left, fled to Akre in Iraqi Kurdistan in the summer of 2014. Their family depends on assistance, including food, from aid organizations. Photo by Kim Pozniak/CRS

CONTEXT

The militant group ISIS has taken over areas of the northern and central parts of the country. Since January 2014, more than 3.2 million people have fled their homes, about half of whom are children. At least 1.5 million people are displaced in the Kurdistan region of Iraq. Civilians of all ethnic and religious backgrounds have been uprooted by the violence, including Christians, Yazidis and Turkmen, and Shiite and Sunni Muslims.

Despite some notable gains by Kurdish fighters and Iraq's military—including ousting ISIS from the Sinjar region and the city of Ramadi—few civilians have returned to these areas. Faced with the cost of war and revenues hit by lower oil prices, the Kurdish and central governments are providing less humanitarian aid than in the previous winter, even though the number of displaced families continues to increase. A growing number of Iraqi families need food, living supplies, education for their children, and opportunities to earn an income. Compounding this crisis, Iraq's northern Kurdistan region has become a refuge for some 230,000 Syrian refugees fleeing their country's civil war.

CRS established a presence in the Kurdistan region in 2014 and we now share offices with Caritas Iraq in Erbil, Dohuk and Kirkuk. CRS employs 50 staff and are exploring further collaboration with Caritas Iraq to help underserved displaced populations in central Iraq.

IMPACT TO DATE

Together, CRS and Caritas Iraq have served more than 101,000* displaced Iraqis with cash and food assistance, improved shelter and sanitation, and counseling and social services for children. Specific activities include:

- **Shelter improvements, and water and sanitation facilities** for nearly 1,500 buildings serving 29,099 people. CRS has started upgrades in Kirkuk while continuing work in Dohuk. An additional 193 houses serving 2,273 people have been completed. We are upgrading 200 buildings in Kirkuk and 300 in Dohuk to serve 9,800 people by March. Our teams also are preparing 500 shelter upgrades beyond March for an additional 9,800 beneficiaries.
- **Winter supply kits** with essential living supplies provided to 40,309 people.
- **Monthly food voucher distributions** from June to September for 11,584 people.
- **Cash assistance** for kerosene, living supplies, rent and other needs has helped 32,289 people.
- **Nine child support centers** serving 3,059 children, offering educational activities, counseling and recreational support so they can transition back to school. With support from the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration, CRS plans to expand these centers to care for 6,000 children. Tents used in previous months were replaced by prefabricated buildings more suitable for winter months.
- **Training** of more than 50 child support center staff in classroom management and lesson planning.
- **A child well-being assessment** that demonstrated improvements in the behavior of participating children.
- **Negotiation** with the Department of Education of Nineveh and Dohuk toward establishing a formal school for 1,500 uprooted children.

* Some beneficiaries may have received more than one service. The total number of beneficiaries is estimated to be more than 101,000.

IRAQI REFUGEES IN JORDAN

CRS continues to support Caritas Jordan in responding to the needs of more than 200 families—1,034 people—who fled ISIS and arrived in the summer of 2014. The families received food and shelter through 15 parishes in and around Amman. In late 2015, CRS helped Caritas Jordan move families out of church halls and into apartments or caravans in planned sites on church property. In 2016, CRS continues to support families via Caritas Jordan so school-age children have access to education, and families have access to counseling and other support.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

VIOLENCE + INSECURITY



In Boda, families have received seeds and tools from CRS to jumpstart their livelihoods.
Photos by Michael Stulman/CRS

CONTEXT

In the Central African Republic, people are awaiting results of the presidential and general elections. Elections were held in relative peace in December, but the Constitutional Court called for a re-election on February 14. A peaceful election is viewed as critical to stabilizing the country.

The Central African Republic has been wracked by violence since a primarily Muslim rebel group, the Seleka, seized power in March 2013. A wave of violent reprisals occurred against Muslim families who had nothing to do with the conflict. Thousands have fled their homes or they remain indoors, fearful. The civil strife has destroyed lives, killing more than 5,000 and uprooting 1 million. People are unable to move, farm or live freely.

CRS RESPONSE

CRS has been working in partnership with the few providers of humanitarian assistance. Together, we provide seeds and tools so people can grow much-needed food and draw income. We also facilitate conflict-resolution activities, and provide critical living supplies and support to rebuild homes and lives.

IMPACT TO DATE

Food, agriculture, livelihoods

- Supported 21,881 families with seeds and tools for the 2015 planting season.
- Provided post-harvest kits—storage sacks, water jugs and tarpaulins—to 2,940 families.
- Repaired 15 mills for farmer groups.
- Provided training in agricultural techniques for 55 farmer groups.
- Trained 250 families on land preparation for rebuilding and placing latrines.
- Provided vaccinations for 1,300 animals, supporting 400 herders.
- Engaged 450 families in cash-for-work activities in Lobaye prefecture to repair 15 miles of road.
- Launched a savings and internal lending communities, or SILC, program in the town of Bouar. The SILC projects now involve 188 groups with more than 3,740 members.

Shelter and living supplies

- Provided shelter kits to 5,200 families and living supplies to 12,221 families.
- Identified 2,300 especially vulnerable families for shelter rebuilding and support.
- Provided 300 families with vouchers to reconstruct their homes—at least 66 are nearly finished.
- Repaired two bridges, allowing access to 32 villages and 2,000 people.
- Provided cash-for-work opportunities to 377 people to repair a cement bridge, restore vegetable stalls, and improve 200 meters of road to improve access to local markets.

Social cohesion

- Brought community members together on local projects, such as repairing schools and rehabilitating playing fields.
- Trained field workers to identify and record disease outbreaks in an early warning system, or EWS.
- Installed radios in 20 communities to connect them to an EWS.
- Hosted 800 interfaith and local leaders for peacebuilding and trauma-healing workshops.

21,881

FAMILIES WERE SUPPORTED WITH SEEDS AND TOOLS FOR THE 2015 PLANTING SEASON.

faith. action. results.

ETHIOPIA

DROUGHT + FOOD SHORTAGES



Mekiya Hamido, a mother of three whose family depends on a cow, a goat and a plot where she cultivates the cash crop called 'chat' in Ethiopia's Ifaba district, is among hundreds of thousands faced with the effects of climate change. *Photo by Kim Pozniak/CRS*

CONTEXT

Across Ethiopia, two failed rainy seasons in 2015 have led to severely reduced harvests and a shortage of food. The price of staples like lentils has increased by 70 percent, while prices for livestock, a key income generator, have fallen by as much as 80 percent. Families are struggling to get by, and concerns are rising about increased food shortages and malnutrition. The government has called for international assistance. Without rainfall or immediate aid, the number of people who need emergency food assistance could rise above 15 million.

In the past 13 years, Ethiopia has achieved sustained economic growth that has nearly doubled its economy, thanks to investment in development, agriculture and water programs. Improved infrastructure and market stability have reduced malnutrition and food shortages over the past decade. Meanwhile, other sustained support, such as to the Ministry of Health, expanded primary health care into rural areas.

Despite these important gains, Ethiopia remains highly susceptible to shocks—particularly from climate change. The combination of a burgeoning population—which has grown by 40 percent to some 100 million since 2003—and dependence on rain-fed agriculture, leaves the economy and its people at particular risk from drought.

CRS RESPONSE

CRS is boosting assistance to provide emergency food aid to 2.2 million people. We will invest heavily in seeds for the 2016 planting season, which begins in March, as well as in fodder, feed and vaccinations for livestock. We will determine availability, access and quality of seeds; farmers' typical sources for seeds; and local market and government resources.

CRS will collaborate with the government of Ethiopia at all stages, working in the Oromia, Amhara, and Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' regions.

Activities will include:

- Holding seed and voucher fairs. These rely on commercial seed firms as well as local seed producers and traders.
- Distributing seeds from local and regional suppliers where functioning markets and seeds are not available.
- Supplying animal feed to help keep livestock alive and prevent further deterioration of animal health because of scarce pastureland.
- Planting hundreds of acres with distributed seed, and monitoring crop performance.

SOUTHERN AFRICA REGION: DROUGHT CONCERNS RISING

Rain shortfalls caused by the El Niño weather patterns are leading to increasing concerns about food shortages and drought affecting Angola, Lesotho, Madagascar, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Lesotho and Zimbabwe have already declared states of emergency. As in Ethiopia, food prices are rising while people's incomes are plummeting from the loss of crops and weakening livestock. The World Food Program predicts that approximately 14 million people in the region could experience food shortages this year—with 2.8 million in Malawi alone.

CRS' response includes seed fairs, distribution of food and cash vouchers for the purchase of critical supplies where markets are functioning, and provision of nutritional supplements.



However, current weather conditions are expected to further exacerbate the crisis. Additional resources are needed to help farmers and their families cope: CRS teams are designing climate-smart agriculture programs in Zambia and Malawi; disaster risk reduction efforts in Madagascar; integrated watershed and natural resource management programs in Lesotho; and measures to strengthen resilience in Zimbabwe.

WEST AFRICA

EBOLA VIRUS



A patient and her daughter at Star of the Sea Health Center wait to receive postnatal care in Monrovia, Liberia. CRS support has helped Star of the Sea and many other health clinics stay open, and keep workers safe and communities healthy throughout the Ebola outbreak. *Photo by Michael Stulman/CRS*

CONTEXT

On January 14, 2016, the World Health Organization declared the Ebola outbreak in West Africa over, but less than 24 hours later, new cases were confirmed in Sierra Leone. Nearly 2 years after the Ebola outbreak was first reported in March 2014, the total number of reported cases has reached 28,639, and an estimated 11,316 people have died. This is the deadliest occurrence of the disease since it was discovered in 1976. The recent epidemic has killed five times more people than the total deaths from all other known Ebola outbreaks.

The WHO stressed that Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone remain at high risk of additional small outbreaks of Ebola in the coming months because survivors continue to carry the virus after they recover. A massive effort is underway to ensure robust prevention, surveillance and response capacity across all three countries by the end of March.

CRS RESPONSE

CRS is managing a \$19.7 million response focused on prevention, recovery and healing. Activities since the start of the crisis, and throughout the past 2 years, have focused on:

- Communicating prevention and treatment awareness messaging to millions of people, including training and mobilizing community leaders and volunteers to have a wide reach.
- Providing key equipment at health care facilities, and training for thousands of staff.
- Support for safe, dignified burials.
- Improved water, sanitation and hygiene infrastructure, as well as waste management at health facilities.
- Counseling and support to vulnerable families suffering from trauma or issues of stigma.
- Discharge kits for Ebola survivors and food assistance for vulnerable families.
- Care of children orphaned by Ebola.



ROLE IN RECOVERY

CRS' critical programming continues to focus on training in infection prevention and control, quality assurance monitoring, trauma and grief counseling, psychosocial support, food security and care of orphans. CRS will continue to play a major role in recovery. Watch a short video on YouTube about CRS' Ebola response: [Responding to the Ebola Outbreak in West Africa](#).

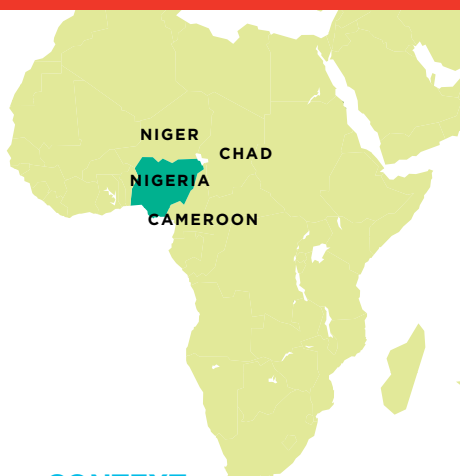


CRS helped St. Joseph's Catholic Hospital in Monrovia to reopen and provide laboratory services to screen patients for infectious diseases, including Ebola. *Photo by Michael Stulman/CRS*



NIGERIA

CONFLICT + FOOD INSECURITY



Beneficiaries redeem vouchers for vital food items. The United Nations estimates that 4.6 million people do not have access to sufficient food. Photo by Maxwell Samaila/CRS

CONTEXT

Nigerians are fleeing the violence of militant group Boko Haram, which has carried out attacks in the northeast and killed more than 13,000 people since 2009—including 10,000 in 2014. The group has planted bombs in public places, abducted women and girls, forcefully conscripted young men and boys, and destroyed villages and towns. As recently as February 11, an attack killed 58 people at Dikwa refugee camp in northeast Nigeria.

In the northeast, at least 2.1 million Nigerians have been internally displaced, with 92 percent living with host families, and the remainder living in camps. Those living with families are dispersed and much more difficult to reach than those in camps. Most of the displaced are farmers, herders and traders. Violence has had a serious impact on cultivation, harvest and livestock herding. The

economic system has taken a heavy hit in the northeastern states of Yobe and Adamawa, and Boko Haram's home state of Borno, devastating local agriculture and people's opportunities to earn income.

Currently, the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, or OCHA, estimates that 4.6 million people in the northeast lack access to sufficient food, and need immediate food assistance. Violence has disrupted people's ability to farm, herd livestock and trade goods. While overall food production in Nigeria is average or higher this year, displacement and insecurity have dramatically reduced production in Borno, northern Adamawa and southern Yobe. Boko Haram militants are preventing CRS partner staff from accessing some wards in Geidam, Yobe state.



Vulnerable community members receive help registering for aid. Photo by Francis Ogum/CRS

CRS RESPONSE

- **Health care** Supporting 259,483 eligible children with polio immunization and providing general health counseling to their caregivers through the CORE Group Partners Project. We support care for malnutrition, diarrhea, pneumonia and other illnesses at health camps and temporary clinics in underserved communities.
- **Malaria emergency response** Provided 49,000 people in Geidam and Bursari, in Yobe state, with anti-malarial drugs and mosquito nets, and used rapid diagnostic kits at health camps to provide targeted malaria treatment and support. This project has ended.
- **Emergency food assistance** Providing monthly assistance—through food and vouchers—to 31,356 people in Geidam and Bursari. All voucher programs have transitioned to e-voucher technologies.
- **Water, sanitation and hygiene** Providing an initial 500 families with hygiene supplies and soap in a pilot project using e-vouchers through smart cards. The project will apply a market-based approach to strengthen the local economy and businesses. Each family will be required to attend an education session on water and sanitation to qualify for the e-voucher.
- **Collaboration** Coordinating a process for defining households and household size to improve equity for aid recipients, and collaboration among humanitarian groups. CRS and other organizations in Yobe meet regularly to share information and lessons learned, coordinate services and prevent duplication. CRS co-leads the Yobe State Food Security Group. With Caritas, CRS has also started a Cash and Markets Technical Working Group to convene organizations that deliver cash assistance.

MALI

CONFLICT + DROUGHT + FLOODS



CONTEXT

The people of Mali have faced a dangerous combination of internal conflict and drought over the past few years, depleting the country's limited resources. While many families uprooted by conflict in early 2015 have been returning home, including 491,000 former refugees, at least 49,800 remain uprooted within the country. More than 138,000 Malians are living as refugees in neighboring countries.

Despite improved rainfall and security in parts of the country, 2.5 million people are estimated to be in need of humanitarian assistance this year. This includes 709,000 malnourished children and 825,000 people in need of clean water. The needs are especially pressing in Timbuktu. A food and nutrition crisis is on the rise: More than 15 percent of the country's population is without sufficient food, with 12.4 percent facing acute malnutrition. Continuing hostilities, banditry and restricted movement of humanitarian workers have significantly reduced assistance to people in dire need. The security situation worsened after several high profile terrorist attacks in the capital, Bamako, and other areas of the country, prompting the government to call for a state of emergency until March 2016.



Families await medicine provided by CRS during the launch of a malaria prevention program. CRS is building on its programs and partnerships in the country to respond to escalating humanitarian needs caused by recent crises. *Photo by Sylvain Cherkaoui for CRS*

CRS RESPONSE

Despite restrictions due to the unstable security environment in the north and limited access for humanitarian actors in high-risk areas, CRS has been able to provide immediate assistance to some of Mali's most vulnerable communities affected by conflict and drought. Focusing its response in the Timbuktu region, CRS was able to provide emergency relief to 1,263 vulnerable families, and is now focusing on nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene support for 1,293 families.

IMPACT TO DATE

Timbuktu region

- Livestock fairs for 1,000 people in areas heavily affected by drought.
- Cash-for-work opportunities for 1,000 families to reconstruct key local water infrastructure during the 2015 monsoon season.
- Cash transfers for 963 families.
- Animal fodder distribution for 2,000 families for 1 month
- Rehabilitation of three water infrastructure sites.

49,800

**PEOPLE REMAIN
UPROOTED WITHIN
THE COUNTRY**

faith. action. results.



COSTA RICA

HUMANITARIAN CRISIS



CONTEXT

The Costa Rican government is struggling to support 7,000 Cubans living in shelters who need food and living supplies. An estimated 40,000 Cubans have migrated to Costa Rica over a period of years, mainly via Ecuador, in an effort to reach the United States. Following President Obama's declaration that Cubans may enter the United States under the Cuban Adjustment Act—and receive migrant benefits—this migration has accelerated.

However, once they reach Costa Rica, the migrants become stranded. Nicaragua, Guatemala and Belize are among the countries that have closed their borders. This has put a heavy strain on the Costa Rican government, which is providing shelter, food, medical

care and other basic assistance. The government has said that its capacity for care and assistance is limited.

On December 28, 2015, foreign ministers from the Central American Integration System regional group and the Mexican government decided to allow Cubans to be airlifted to El Salvador from Costa Rica, and then board buses for the United States.

Despite this decision, significant financial, humanitarian and logistical challenges remain. Costa Rica is hosting 7,000 Cubans—5,500 in 38 shelters across the small country. Many of the shelters are in schools. Their main needs include food, water, hygiene kits, shelter, clothes and other essentials.

CRS RESPONSE

CRS' partner, Caritas Costa Rica, has been providing assistance since the crisis began, and is running six shelters that provide dignified living environments in otherwise harsh conditions. Caritas Costa Rica is providing care for about 20 percent of all immigrants. CRS is planning to provide similar support to Cuban migrants in neighboring Panama.

CRS supports two Caritas shelters with the following:

- Key living supplies, including kitchen supplies, propane gas, bedding and other essentials.
- Shelter improvements, such as showers and toilets, refrigerators and stoves, and provisions including hygiene and sanitation supplies.
- A safe space and recreational facilities for families.
- Repairs to roofs, walls, electricity and plumbing.
- Training of Caritas humanitarian staff and volunteers on shelter management, procurement and handling of goods, development of emergency protocols, international humanitarian standards and human rights.
- Delivery of insect repellents and mosquito nets to prevent an outbreak of the Zika virus.

NEPAL

EARTHQUAKE RECOVERY

CRS and Caritas Nepal continue with their major recovery efforts in Gorkha district, following Nepal's powerful earthquake last April. During the winter, providing cold-weather supplies was critical in high-altitude areas, as families faced below-freezing temperatures. To date, CRS has provided 130,000 people with critical shelter materials, living supplies, and water treatment and hygiene supplies. We are now helping them lay a foundation for full recovery, with an emphasis on strengthened markets and safe shelter.

In Kathmandu, CRS is sponsoring a 2-day practitioner course on environmental impact and

sustainability for staff and peer agencies. In close collaboration with the Building Research Establishment Trust, CRS will provide training on the QSAND, Quantifying Sustainability in the Aftermath of Natural Disasters, a self-assessment tool to promote sustainable approaches to relief, recovery and reconstruction after a natural disaster. CRS is taking the lead in the testing of mud mortars and the use of bamboo.

QSAND draws on the features of a design and assessment method for buildings to promote and benchmark sustainable approaches to recovery and reconstruction. The course is designed for professionals with a focus on shelter and settlement to improve their skills and impact in ensuring lasting sustainability with their disaster recovery programming.



In Gorkha, community members view CRS demonstration models for rebuilding safe transitional homes. Photo by CRS staff

