



Emergency Response in the Holy Land

CRS and our partners' efforts will focus on meeting the immediate and long-term needs of Gazan families displaced and affected by this crisis. We aim to serve them as they seek safety, stability and the means to rebuild their lives.

The main street in Gaza.
Photo courtesy of OCHA



Currently intense violence is affecting families across the Holy Land, but by far the greatest suffering is in Gaza, one of the poorest and most crowded corners of the world and a place from which people are uniquely unable to flee to safety. Nearly 200 Gazan civilians have been killed and more than 1,200 injured. Bombardments have destroyed and damaged many hundreds of homes, leaving tens of thousands displaced.

Gazan families, many of whom live in multi-generational households, are being given just minutes to flee their homes, taking only what they can carry. They are taking refuge with family and friends as well as in collective sites. The damage to roads and the diminishing electricity supply has severely limited emergency response services.

The Gaza Strip, a small area of land not even a tenth the size of Rhode Island, is home to an estimated 2 million people. Decades of intermittent armed conflict coupled with a comprehensive blockade has had a lasting and profound impact on its people. The perennial nature of violence has inhibited lasting recovery, leaving families extremely vulnerable and unable to cope with new shocks. In addition, COVID-19 has put further pressure on an already strained public health sector.

58,000

PEOPLE FLED THEIR HOMES FOLLOWING THE BOMBARDMENT THAT HAS LED TO EXTENSIVE DAMAGE TO HOMES AND INFRASTRUCTURE.

HOW TO HELP

- Donate online: support.crs.org/gaza
- Donate by phone: 1-877-HELP-CRS
- Donate by check: Holy Land Emergency Response Catholic Relief Services, P.O. Box 17090, Baltimore, Maryland 21297-0303



“ Let us pray constantly that the Israelis and Palestinians may find the path of dialogue and forgiveness. Let us pray for the victims, in particular for the children. Let us pray for peace.

Pope Francis
May 2021



CRS is preparing to provide emergency shelter to families whose homes were damaged in the conflict. Photo courtesy of OCHA

CRS AND PARTNER RESPONSE

Catholic Relief Services is able to draw on our extensive experience and partnerships in Gaza where we have been active for decades and where we responded comprehensively to the needs of those affected by the 2014 war.

Our immediate focus will be to meet the needs of families displaced and affected by this crisis, as they seek safety, stability and the means to rebuild their lives. Together with your support, CRS will assist at least 2,000 Gazan families.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Emergency food and living supplies

CRS will provide the most affected families with food and supplies through electronic vouchers recognized by registered local vendors across Gaza. We are currently registering families who lose their homes each day, with the intention of activating vouchers on their phones as soon as shops are able to reopen. This program will continue to expand to more families as we are able to do more extensive assessments of the effects of the violence. Cash assistance helps promote the dignity of choice and allows families flexibility to buy what they need most.

Support to local health facilities

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have worked closely with health facilities across the Gaza strip to meet their expanded emergency staffing needs. As a result of the current fighting, we will expand our support with personnel, supplies, equipment and technical guidance to six Catholic and other nongovernmental health facilities, to ensure they have what they need to provide emergency health services.

Safe and dignified homes

Since 2014, CRS has helped ensure safe, dignified shelter for 1,000 Gazan families. Our team is now preparing to provide support to families whose homes have been damaged in the conflict.

We will provide funding and technical support, accompanying them as they make repairs or improvements, including increased access to water and sanitation. Our shelter improvements will integrate measures to protect high-risk families from COVID-19.

Emotional support to cope with trauma

CRS will help provide psychological first aid to Gazan children and adolescents through our online communication channels. We will also scale up our work to build critical life skills among adolescents and strengthen support provided by caregivers. Drawing on learning from the COVID-19 context, CRS and our partner staff are prepared for either in-person or remote psychosocial programming.

CRS EXPERIENCE AND PARTNERSHIP

CRS has been serving families in the Holy Land since 1961. Our presence and extensive network of local partners enables us to respond to urgent needs, and to closely monitor programs and security.

Since its establishment in 1943 to support refugees fleeing war-torn Europe, CRS has evolved into one of the world's leading humanitarian relief and development agencies. We provide lifesaving relief in the wake of natural and human-made emergencies and address issues of chronic poverty and injustice through innovative and sustainable development programs.

The vast majority of our projects are implemented in partnership with local organizations with which we share a vision. Strengthening the capacity of these partners is fundamental to programs in every country where we work. We place special emphasis on working with the social agencies of the local Catholic Church and other faith-based organizations because of our mutual commitment to promoting justice and integral human development.