



Urgent Relief for Survival in Gaza

CRS Works with Church and Local Partners to Provide Relief in Gaza's Deepening Crisis



CRS Gaza members visit families where CRS provides shelter, water and sanitation support across displaced sites. Photo by CRS staff.

CONTEXT

Families in Gaza are enduring catastrophic conditions as hostilities escalate and basic necessities for survival vanish. The Ministry of Health in Gaza and the United Nations reports indicate that deaths from starvation and severe malnutrition are rising daily. Amid relentless violence, people are grappling with death, injury, forced displacement and deep psychological trauma. More than 2 million people are now crammed into an area smaller than 17 square miles, with 88% of the territory under Israeli military control or designated for evacuation.

The Ministry of Health in Gaza reports that emergency rooms are filling with people collapsing from physical depletion. Hundreds of children and adults have surpassed the limits of their physical endurance and are at imminent risk of death.

On July 26, the Israeli Defense Force indicated humanitarian corridors would be established and humanitarian pauses implemented in densely populated areas. This follows nearly three months of restricted aid access due to complex bureaucratic, logistical and security constraints, as well as ongoing

hostilities. The limited aid allowed to cross into Gaza in recent months has fallen far below the threshold needed to curb starvation or sustain lifesaving services.

The gap in safe shelter for families is growing due to repeated forced displacements, the limited lifespan of shelter materials, damage or loss during movement and harsh living conditions.

HOW TO HELP

- Donate online: support.crs.org/donate/holy-land-conflict
- Donate by phone: 1-877-HELP-CRS
- Donate by check: Catholic Relief Services, Holy Land Response P.O. Box 5278, Tipton, IA 52772-0517



In the West Bank, Israeli settler attacks have intensified across multiple governorates. Since January 2024, an estimated 35,969 Palestinians have been displaced. Humanitarian access remains constrained, including in the Jenin refugee camp, where bulldozers continue demolitions and residents are subjected to heavy movement restrictions.

CRS AND PARTNER RESPONSE

Despite staggering challenges, CRS and our partners have reached 1.7 million people in Gaza since 2023 with food, shelter, water, sanitation and hygiene, cash assistance and psychosocial support.

The Church's historical and cultural presence in Gaza and the broader region is more vital than ever. CRS' long-standing partners are deeply rooted in the life of the community and are trusted across religious and social lines. Yet they operate under grave danger, often directly in harm's way. Despite the bombing of Church facilities in Gaza, Caritas Jerusalem and Catholic missionary orders continue to serve people most in need with courage and compassion.

CRS has supported vulnerable communities in Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza since 1961 and has maintained a continuous presence in the Gaza Strip since 1984. CRS currently has 110 staff members in JWBG—including 65 staff in Gaza—and offices in East Jerusalem, Ramallah, Bethlehem, and north and south Gaza. Additionally, CRS has pipelines for the procurement and entry of goods into Gaza from Jordan, Egypt and the West Bank.

PROGRAM PRIORITIES

At a time of heightened urgency and expanding crisis, an established presence and trust are essential. Decades of work with communities, the local Catholic Church and partners enables CRS' rapid, impactful and flexible response in the fast-changing and complex context. Urgent needs include:

Safe and Dignified Shelter and Housing:

Emergency shelter supplies; shelter repair kits; cash for home repair; construction of transitional shelters; upgrading of collective shelters; home repairs; rehabilitation of community infrastructure. *Since October 2023, CRS and partners have provided shelter assistance—including bedding, living supplies, tarps, tents and shelter repair kits—to 341,790 people.*

Food and Cash Assistance: Food rations—including dry rations and ready-to-eat meals—for people who lack access to food, markets and cooking facilities. Multipurpose cash assistance for families to purchase food and basic items where markets are accessible, and, thereby supporting the local economy. *Since October 2023, CRS and partners have provided food and cash assistance to 1.72 million people.*

To gain a deeper understanding of Gaza's market conditions for supporting food security and urgent humanitarian needs, CRS, Save the Children and Mercy Corps produced a [Market Study: Phase II Joint Market Assessment conducted across Gaza](#).

The study offers insights into consumer access, trader dynamics and local production capacity, and provides actionable recommendations for humanitarian actors to design and implement effective cash- and market-based interventions in Gaza.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene: Critical hygiene supplies; access to clean water through water trucking and provisions; construction of latrines in makeshift camps; support for sanitation and hand-washing facilities; rehabilitation of water systems and treatment units. *Since October 2023, CRS and partners have provided clean water, latrines, hygiene and sanitation kits and supplies to 500,268 people.*

Psychosocial Support: Assistance for children and adults to manage grief, distress and trauma through psychological first aid; recreational activities for children in child-friendly spaces; creation of a referral network for specialized care; training and support for caregivers. *Since October 2023, CRS and partners have provided psychosocial support to 10,399 children and adolescents, and 1,333 caregivers.*

Support for Church Partners in Gaza: CRS continues to work with a network of longstanding, committed partners in Gaza who enjoy community trust and have strong grassroots connections. CRS also supports Church partners in Gaza as they serve as temporary shelters for approximately 400 people. CRS assists with hygiene items, cash assistance, clothing, tarps and other humanitarian goods as available. In a time of fear and flight, CRS works with its partners to uphold human dignity, even amid bombardment and continuous displacement.