



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.



Palestinian women walk past destruction in Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza. Photo by AP Photo/Hatem Moussa

## SPOTLIGHT

### THE HOLY LAND

A humanitarian crisis continues to escalate across the Holy Land with continued air strikes on Gaza following an unprecedented attack on Israel on October 7. As civilian deaths rapidly increase, so does the destruction of civilian, residential, medical and religious properties. Since October 7, it is reported that more than 10,400 people have been killed, of whom 3,700 are children.

The people of Gaza are experiencing unbearable and increasing deprivation despite an abundance of aid just out of their reach. Nearly 1.4 million people in Gaza—62% of the population—have been displaced. With at least 45% of homes in Gaza destroyed, as well as the recent shelling of refugee camps, hospitals and churches, a safe haven is out of reach.

Beyond people's physical needs is the emotional toll across the Holy Land—immense suffering, despair, grief and trauma. Catholic Relief Services staff members are working every day to provide assistance to people who are most vulnerable, increasing their own personal risks in the process.

CRS' emergency response is cross-regional. We are prepared to respond quickly and extensively, due in large part to our longstanding presence in the Holy Land.

CRS is coordinating closely with 13 local partners trained in emergency response, as well as the United Nations, civil society and humanitarian aid organizations, to support the following:



Beyond people's physical needs is the emotional toll across the Holy Land—immense suffering, despair, grief and trauma. CRS staff members are working every day to provide assistance to people who are most vulnerable, increasing their own personal risks in the process. Photo by Shareef Sarhan for CRS.

- Assistance for Church partners in Gaza to care for the thousands of people who are staying in their compounds.
- Emergency shelter supplies, including winter items.
- Household items including mattresses, blankets and other materials.
- Hygiene kits.
- Cash assistance.
- Psychological first aid and caregiver support.

## IN THE NEWS

### AFGHANISTAN

In October 2023, Afghanistan's Herat province experienced a series of powerful earthquakes, including a 6.3 magnitude quake on October 7, a second of the same magnitude on October 11 and a third on October 15. These earthquakes resulted in more than 1,480 deaths, 1,950 injuries, and extensive damage to homes, schools and infrastructure.

Around 27,155 people—2,835 families—have been affected across eight districts in Herat. Displacement sites formed in Herat due to damaged homes and aftershocks. Urgent needs include winter tents, health facility repairs, disease monitoring, and essential aid like blankets, food, water and health care.

In partnership with UNICEF, CRS is directly responding in Herat province, where we have swiftly provided cash assistance, and will support shelter and water, sanitation and hygiene.

At the same time, Afghanistan is managing another crisis after the Pakistan government announced in early October that it will deport foreigners without documentation, including an estimated 1.7 million undocumented Afghan migrants. An estimated 140,000 Afghans returned to Afghanistan in the last few weeks, putting pressure the country's overly strained system. Approximately 770,000 people will require assistance at border points, including food, water, shelter, education, medical

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supplies and services, as well as longer-term resettlement support. With winter rapidly approaching, support for immediate needs is urgent.

## ARMENIA

Nagorno Karabakh—Artsakh in Armenian, or NK—is a region in the Southern Caucasus mountains that is internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan but home to around 120,000 ethnic Armenians who do not recognize Azerbaijani rule. Since December 12, 2022, Azerbaijan has blocked the Lachin Corridor, the highway that connects NK with Armenia, cutting off assistance to the area and leading to shortages in NK.

On September 19, 2023, the Azerbaijani Armed Forces launched a military offensive into NK, resulting in 200 casualties. A Russian-brokered ceasefire is currently in place, and the Republic of Artsakh announced formal dissolution as of January 1, 2024. More than 100,632 ethnic Armenians—nearly the entire Armenian population of NK—have fled to Armenia with few belongings.

The Armenian government has set up humanitarian stations in the Syunik and Vayk Regions of Armenia and is engaging nongovernmental and civil society organizations to support longer-term responses such as housing, livelihoods and education. The Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees launched an inter-agency refugee response plan in mid-October. Our partner, Armenian Caritas, has joined the plan and is supporting emergency efforts in the southern border region of Syunik, and four other regions. They have provided hot meals, shelter, food and hygiene kits, warm blankets and bed linens.

Armenian Caritas also opened its social and health centers for displaced children and older adults. Armenian Caritas social workers are planning to also provide supplies to families who have been displaced, as well as post-traumatic counseling. CRS has made a contribution to support ongoing activities.

## MOROCCO

On September 8, Morocco experienced a devastating earthquake, resulting in more than 2,900 casualties, displacing 500,000 people, and inflicting severe damage on thousands of homes, particularly traditional mud houses. At least 530 schools are in a state of disrepair. It was the strongest earthquake to hit Morocco in over a century. A significant portion of displaced families are staying in tents within settlements, and lack drinkable water and electricity. The need to heat shelters and the potential use of combustion appliances pose a major risk for fire hazards, particularly as winter draws near. Other families have set up tents next to their damaged homes, which they continue to use for bathing and cooking, exposing them to

the risk of house collapse. The region's high elevation makes the absence of adequate shelter all the more perilous in winter.

The government of Morocco initiated a five-year reconstruction plan focused on housing, infrastructure and emergency assistance. Caritas Morocco is providing shelter, bedding and household supplies, as well as water, sanitation and hygiene facilities, for 8,000 families in Taroudant, Ouarzazate and Marrakech provinces. Additionally, large, insulated communal tents will be equipped with heating systems to create safe spaces for cooking and children's activities. CRS is also supporting the Congregation of the Sacred Heart Sisters to provide counseling support to students, parents and teachers at one of their 12 schools. In parallel, CRS continues to support Association Tiwizi, in collaboration with local authorities, to ensure food, medications, shelter and living supplies, and winter items are available. While we are currently prioritizing temporary shelter, water, sanitation and hygiene, livelihoods recovery is a major focus of support in the long term.

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CRS is also supporting the Congregation of the Sacred Heart Sisters to provide counseling support to students, parents and teachers at one of their 12 schools.



Emiliano, 3, eats lunch at the Madre Asunta Center, a shelter in Tijuana Mexico specializing in the care of migrant women and children and supported by CRS. Photo by Óscar Leiva/Silverlight for CRS

## MEXICO

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On October 25, 2023, Category 5 Hurricane Otis made landfall in Mexico, devastating infrastructure across affected areas. CRS is supporting emergency response efforts of Caritas Mexicana, which is working together with the archdiocese of Acapulco. Priority needs are for food, shelter, and water, sanitation and hygiene. Emergency efforts will take place in the city of Acapulco and parts of San Marcos, Marquelia and Coyuca de Benitez municipalities.

## CENTRAL AMERICA

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In Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador, escalating gang violence and drug cartels have caused families to flee north in increasing numbers. Economic collapse in places like Venezuela, as well as failed harvests caused by environmental degradation and climate change, are driving large numbers of people to flee desperate conditions in their home countries. Thousands of people—including entire families—have arrived in Mexico seeking humanitarian visas, shelter, asylum or transit permits to reach the U.S. border. At the same time,

Mexicans are displaced and migrating north to escape organized crime. More than 120 shelters and organizations are managed by Catholic institutions and civil society organizations across the region that provide food, safe shelter, medical assistance, legal advice, counseling and referrals to other organizations as needed for additional services. These shelters have been doubling or even tripling their capacity and providing more services than usual—particularly for mental health, employment, legal representation and education.

CRS is working with our Catholic partners and civic organizations to improve the safety, quality and efficiency of shelters and to strengthen the capacity of staff and institutions at the front lines of the migrant crisis. This includes assistance for food, medicine and supplies; legal, medical and psychological counseling; upgraded facilities; and strengthening the capacity of shelter staff.

## NIGER

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During July's military coup, a group of soldiers calling themselves the National Council for the Safeguard of the Homeland announced suspension of the Niger constitution and the dissolution of the government. Border crossings via land and air were closed, and a nightly curfew was put in place. Within 48 hours, General Abdourahamane Tchiani, head of the presidential guard unit, declared himself Niger's new leader. In response, the Economic Community of West African States imposed sanctions, restricting Niger's access to banking services, and limiting trade with neighboring countries—affecting the delivery pipeline of essential supplies. Niger's population is already vulnerable: The

country is ranked among the world's poorest. Prior to the current political situation, an estimated 370,000 people were internally displaced in Niger due to violence. What's more, the country hosts a quarter million refugees from neighboring countries including Mali, Burkina Faso and Nigeria.

CRS has long supported a number of development and humanitarian programs across the country, and recently expanded in response to this crisis in the Tilaberi and Diffa regions. There, CRS is supporting 2,100 families with cash assistance: 1,605 displaced families with vouchers for food assistance, and 657 families with cash-for-work activities for land restoration and water runoff management. CRS is also launching a long-term emergency food security program that will reach more than 3,500 families with nutritional rehabilitation, food assistance and small animal husbandry.

## NEPAL

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On November 3, a 6.4 magnitude earthquake struck Nepal and was followed by several aftershocks. The death toll is continuing to climb as rescuers gain more access to affected areas. With more than 150 people reported killed, the Jajarkot quake is the deadliest since 2015 when about 9,000 people died in two earthquakes in Nepal. An estimated 26,520 homes are completely damaged, leaving as many families displaced.

CRS has experienced partners in the area and will be delivering emergency assistance in three of the most affected municipalities. CRS is also supporting government partners in coordination and planning for recovery and reconstruction.

## UKRAINE

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The war continues to drive increasing humanitarian needs in Ukraine, particularly impacting people who remain in communities close to the front line. Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, more than 7 million people have fled to neighboring countries, while 6.3 million remain displaced within Ukraine. Across the region, the role of Caritas partners is unparalleled. Even at the onset of conflict—when Caritas staff members were directly affected and uprooted from their homes and loved ones—they provided food, shelter, counseling and medical assistance.

CRS' support to Caritas partners in 11 countries has directly benefited 1.6 million people with

safe shelter, food and nutrition, cash assistance, hygiene and living supplies, counseling, protection and health services. These efforts have evolved to meet longer-term needs—such as repair to war-damaged homes, cash assistance for rent,

language courses and jobs-skills training in neighboring countries, and education and trauma healing for children. A major part of CRS support is assisting Caritas partners with capacity and support for project implementation.



Ukrainians repair their war-damaged houses with cash assistance, helping them to return home and prepare for winter. Photo courtesy of Caritas Ukraine staff

## SILENT EMERGENCIES

HIGHLIGHTING EMERGENCIES OFTEN OVERLOOKED IN GLOBAL ATTENTION AND SUPPORT.

### GLOBAL FOOD CRISIS

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Communities across the world continue to face life-threatening levels of hunger on an unprecedented scale. At least 258 million people across 58 countries and territories are facing food insecurity—in some cases, starvation, destitution, extremely critical levels of acute malnutrition and death. Areas of urgent concern include East Africa and the Sahel. CRS is working with local and national partners around the world on programs that combine immediate, lifesaving support—including food distributions, nutritional supplements, clean water provision and health services. Longer-term initiatives seek to address the underlying causes of food insecurity by supporting communities and farmers with agricultural approaches that

restore degraded lands, promote resilient seeds and practices that withstand droughts and other climate disasters, and bolster sustainable livelihoods.

To reverse this trend, we must work with and support existing local systems: Local organizations are often the first to respond to emergencies—sometimes, the only ones with access to people in need. Likewise, local government, when safe and functioning, is the first mandated line of social protection and, where possible, needs support to provide food and nutrition services such as cash, livestock assistance, water services and more. However, many local and national organizations might not have humanitarian experience, funding or operational capacity. Additionally, local market systems

need support to be functional and resilient—not only to provide affordable food and nutrition, but also to support livelihoods—even during crises that strain them.

Our programs must engage local vendors, suppliers and markets to help ensure the local economy can survive and recover. Strained local supply chains disrupt the availability of food, causing prices to skyrocket. Assistance that engages and strengthens local supply chains helps keep food affordable and accessible in communities that are at greatest risk for hunger and starvation. Funding and efforts to strengthen local leadership and institutions uphold our commitment to subsidiarity, the belief that communities closest to local challenges are the best agents of their own development.

## ZIMBABWE



A woman carries a bucket of clean water from a collection point near her home in Zimbabwe. A CRS project there supports access to safe drinking water by delivering piped water closer to communities. This helps reduce the spread of diseases like cholera. Photo by Tariro Mhute/CRS

Zimbabwe has experienced cyclical cholera outbreaks since 2008, when more than 90,000 cases were reported and 5,000 people died from the disease. These outbreaks have largely been confined to the capital, Harare, and the government has been able to control its spread. But, in February 2023, a new outbreak of cholera started in Mashonaland West Province and has now spread to all 10 provinces of Zimbabwe—notably Manicaland and Masvingo provinces. The Mwerahar River that flows through the area is expected to spread the disease as people upstream wash infected clothes and blankets, polluting the drinking water for communities downstream. The outbreak has overwhelmed the government health system. Many cholera treatment centers lack essential supplies and the Ministry of Health does not have the mobility to effectively carry out contact tracing, health education and water quality monitoring. CRS is providing equipment and sanitation supplies to support cholera treatment centers in Buhera; distributing water, sanitation and hygiene supply kits; repairing water systems; and assisting the Ministry of Health to monitor the quality of water.

## SUDAN

On April 15, 2023, armed conflict erupted across Sudan, with fighting concentrated in the capital, Khartoum, and in cities across the Darfur and Kordofan states. An estimated 4.7 million people have been displaced within the country, or fled across the border to neighboring Egypt, Chad, South Sudan, Ethiopia, the Central African Republic and Libya. Roughly half the country's population—24.7 million people—require humanitarian assistance. The conflict has taken a heavy toll on infrastructure, and limited people's access to water, health care, and other goods and services. Many farmers have been unable to access their land, seeds and materials for cultivation. Concerns are high that this season's harvests might fail.

The latest events have reignited inter-communal violence across Darfur and led to 300,000 people fleeing West Darfur to Chad. Many describe their travel overland as dangerous, but the risks are also high for those who are unable to flee—older adults, people with disabilities

and low-income families who remain in areas of intense conflict because travel is not a viable option. CRS is working with our partners to provide relief to Sudanese refugees in Egypt, Chad and South Sudan as well as to those displaced across the five Darfur states. Priorities include:

- Food.
- Cash assistance.
- Income generating activities.
- Agricultural supplies and tools.
- Shelter and living supplies.
- Strengthened water, sanitation and hygiene capacity, including the repair of water infrastructure.
- Health and nutrition support, including nutrition screenings, therapeutic foods to malnourished children, mobile clinics to serve rural areas, medical supplies for health facilities, and capacity strengthening of nutrition staff.
- Facilitation of social cohesion and peacebuilding activities.
- Psychological support and training of social workers, teachers and parents.



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A CRS staff member addresses the community in Hashaba village, West Darfur, Sudan. Photo by Carlos Barrio/CRS

## MALI

Since early August, security and humanitarian conditions have significantly deteriorated for people across the northern and central regions of Mali. Non-state armed groups have restricted access to several areas, with the dangers of harassment, kidnapping, and violent attacks targeting civilians, businesses and humanitarian responders. As a result, less than 5% of displaced families have been reached with humanitarian assistance in the Timbuktu and Taoudenni regions, and many businesses and services have closed. Scarcity of goods compounded by price inflation has led to families going without food, fuel, and key hygiene and living supplies. Despite current restrictions, CRS is working with partners to provide emergency assistance to internally displaced people in the Ségou and Gao regions. CRS coordinates with other humanitarian and governmental actors to access areas and will expand our programming as the security situation evolves.

CRS is currently providing support in Timbuktu and Taoudenni, Gao, Mopti and Segou, with a focus on food assistance, safe shelter and provision of hygiene supplies and household items. To date, distributions are taking place

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In Mali, scarcity of goods compounded by price inflation has led to families going without food, fuel, and key hygiene and living supplies.

primarily in Mopti and Segou, with plans for direct support in Gao soon. This includes support for local government response and coordination. For example, in Timbuktu, where CRS has been one of the first international nongovernmental organizations to respond, CRS is supporting regional authorities to provide emergency assistance to survivors of a passenger boat attack on the Niger river. And, in Gao, CRS and local partner CRADE are collaborating with local officials to coordinate humanitarian aid to displaced communities.

## HAITI

In 2021, a 7.2 magnitude earthquake struck Haiti, followed by a tropical storm days later. More than 2,200 people lost their lives, and 53,000 homes were fully destroyed. Since then, conditions have become even more difficult, as security has deteriorated. President Jovenel Moïse was assassinated in 2022 and, over the past year, protests and gang activity have escalated in and around Port au Prince, blocking roads and restricting travel. At least 19,000 people have been displaced from the capital city in their search for safer conditions elsewhere in the country. With disruption in the supply chain, prices rose for food, gasoline and diesel. Families across Haiti have been weathering a growing humanitarian crisis, with at least 5 million people experiencing food insecurity.

CRS is working closely with Caritas Haiti and the Episcopal Commission for Catholic Education to meet immediate needs for food, shelter and water, as well as full recovery. To date, CRS and our partners



Talata Dicko, 15, fled her home near Bankass, Mali, in 2019, after armed men attacked her village and burned it to the ground. She's been living at a camp for displaced people in Mopti, Mali, ever since. CRS provided her family with cash upon their arrival, which allowed them to purchase food and clothing. Photo by Annika Hammerschlag for CRS

have supported 41,500 families. This includes providing 15,000 shelter kits; training for masons on safe reconstruction and repair; providing cash assistance to 2,000 farmers, entrepreneurs and vendors; and establishing four farmer field schools to promote productive

agricultural practices. Our long-term areas of focus will prioritize construction of safe, transitional shelter, school reconstruction, water system restoration, livelihoods restoration, and youth and community-led activities to promote resiliency.



Aliya Jeudi lives in Haiti, selling what she harvests from her garden. CRS support has been of great help to her because this year the harvest was not good. CRS' emergency strategy focuses on providing clean water, sanitation, emergency and transitional shelter and livelihood recovery, in addition to assistance to earthquake-affected families to meet their basic needs. Photo by Georges Harry Rouzier for CRS



CRS is supporting emergency efforts to meet lifesaving needs, reduce suffering, build resilience, and support social cohesion and peacebuilding.

This includes the provision of **15,000** shelter kits; training for masons on safe reconstruction and repair; cash assistance to **2,000** farmers, entrepreneurs and vendors; and the establishment of four farmer field schools to productive agricultural practices.

## WEST AND CENTRAL SAHEL

Sharply worsening conflict has caused mass displacement in the central Sahel region. This, coupled with a global food crisis, has created a humanitarian catastrophe in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger. Almost 3 million people have fled violence. Although neighboring communities are sharing their limited resources, overcrowding increases pressure on livelihoods and overall well-being. These compounding events have resulted in heightened insecurity and a climate of volatile instability. CRS is supporting emergency efforts to meet lifesaving needs, reduce suffering, build resilience, and support social cohesion and peacebuilding. Priority areas for assistance include:

- Safe shelter using our Safe Homes and Communities approach—recognizing the home as the entry point for providing comprehensive assistance.
- Cash and supplies to meet basic needs for food and living.
- Livelihoods support, including income generation and climate-smart agriculture.
- Water, sanitation and hygiene.
- Psychological first aid and counseling support.
- Capacity and leadership support for local organizations acting as first responders.

To raise the visibility and support for this crisis, in 2019 religious leaders launched the Sahel Peace Initiative to raise awareness about the importance of promoting peace in the region, advocate for change, and mobilize humanitarian and development actions.



# RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE

## PHILIPPINES

### Ten Years After Typhoon Haiyan

This November marks 10 years since Super Typhoon Haiyan hit the Philippines, claiming more than 6,000 lives, and devastating property and infrastructure on the islands of Leyte and Samar, including 1.1 million homes. Over the past decade, CRS has supported partners and communities in their recovery and rebuilding of homes, livelihoods and infrastructure across the hard-hit areas of eastern Samar and Leyte, including Tacloban City.



Two years after Super Typhoon Haiyan slammed into the Philippines, claiming 6,201 lives and leaving entire swaths of Leyte and Samar islands in ruins, CRS had repaired or reconstructed 20,000 homes. Photo by Kim Pozniak/CRS



### HIGHLIGHTS OF CRS PROGRAMMING IMPACT INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:



#### EMERGENCY PHASE, FIRST 3-6 MONTHS:

40,000 families—200,000 people—benefited from emergency shelter, clean water and sanitation.



#### TRANSITIONAL PHASE, YEARS 1 AND 2:

More than 20,000 families—100,000 people—received support to rebuild their homes, and 17,600 families benefited from latrines. We worked carpenters on trainings to build safe, disaster resistant houses, and supplied essential tools and support to integrate sanitation infrastructure.



#### RECOVERY PHASE, YEARS 3 ONWARDS:

900 families, who lived in dangerous areas along the coast, benefited from CRS support to relocate to safer areas and rebuild their homes and communities. CRS also supported communities to improve local infrastructure for protective buffer zones between the coast and homes, and engage in disaster risk reduction efforts to prepare for future emergencies.

## NEPAL

### Impacts in Recovery From 2015 Earthquake

In April 2015, the 7.8 magnitude Gorkha earthquake struck near Kathmandu and damaged more than 800,000 homes across 32 districts. A reported 60% of the housing damage was in rural areas. CRS' early emergency relief programming soon transitioned to long-standing partnerships, with CRS eventually becoming the



A family gathers in front of their new home in Nepal. Working with local partners and communities, CRS helped rebuild 4,000 homes for people most in need. Photo by Ben

lead agency in the national Housing Reconstruction and Recovery Platform. Through the HRRP, CRS has contributed technical support to the government's National Reconstruction Authority. In this role, CRS helped to facilitate collaboration among stakeholders, supported the development of national technical guidelines and standards for reconstruction, and provided technical

assistance and capacity building for housing recovery and reconstruction programs. By facilitating strengthened policies and strategies,

CRS has helped 126,676 families—603,274 people—reconstruct their homes through the government support system.



Watch the latest video from Nepal on the impact of recovery efforts

## VOICES FROM THE FIELD

We pray for our heroic staff members in Gaza, many of whom are displaced, mourn the loss of loved ones and fear for their lives. Many are working to help others even at their own personal risk. Here, we share messages from some of our CRS Gazan colleagues.

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I have lived through other conflicts before, but this is the first one in which I'm married and have a daughter. It's totally different. Everything just comes to my mind and I want to make sure that we are all safe, that nothing will happen to us.

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We live in constant uncertainty—uncertain of when and where the next bomb will strike, uncertain if we'll return to our families and be reunited with the people we love.

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We are hopeful that a ceasefire will come, with a miracle from God, to end this nightmare.

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There is no safer place to go. If there was anywhere else to go, I would go there.

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The baptism of my daughter in the church where we are sheltering—the church that was damaged in a bombing—was really very special.



## STORIES FROM THE FIELD

*Would you like to learn more about our work around the world?  
Read the latest stories posted on [CRS.org](https://www.crs.org).*

### **Cameroon:**

- [Caring for Cameroon's Displaced](#)

### **Central African Republic:**

- [Supporting Families in Central African Republic](#)
- [Cash Transfers Buoy Displaced Families in Central African Republic](#)
- [Emergency Food Welcomed in Central African Republic](#)
- [Gaining Food and Shelter in Central African Republic](#)

### **Sudan:**

- [Rebuilding sustainable futures](#)
- [Cultivating Peace Amid Social Conflict](#)

### **Tanzania:**

- [Strengthening Food Security and Finances in Tanzania](#)