



CRS teams meet with families affected by Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines. Photo by Jim Stipe/CRS



Families fill church compounds by the thousands in Erbil, Iraq, where a cold winter is setting in. Photo by Daniel Etter for CRS



Interfaith leaders pray with displaced families at a CRS program in Central African Republic. Photo by Catianne Tijerina for CRS

This annual Global Emergencies Update provides a summary of the work of dedicated CRS teams and partners who have supported communities in the face of the year's most pressing humanitarian crises—including Typhoon Hagupit that struck the Philippines in recent days. The following emergency efforts are 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.

In **Asia**, CRS Filipino and emergency teams rush to respond to Typhoon Hagupit, that struck the Philippines on December 6 and is hovering over the country with heavy rains and winds. CRS field teams are currently carrying out assessments across affected areas of Leyte and Samar islands.

In **West Africa**, the **Ebola** crisis continues to claim lives, disrupt routine health care and devastate agricultural production. CRS and local partners are working across the three most affected countries to prevent the spread of the virus, ensure people's access to safe health care, and provide support to communities as they start to heal.

In the **Middle East**, families are fleeing their towns in **Iraq** after attacks by ISIS. In neighboring **Syria**, the civil war has reached its 4th year and uprooted the lives of millions, many of whom now also face the threat of ISIS. In **Gaza**, intense fighting over the summer between Palestinian militants and Israel left Gaza in ruins. CRS is helping communities across the region recover with lifesaving support.

In **Africa**, fighting between two groups seeking power in the **Central African Republic** has created a climate of fear and led to destitution or displacement for hundreds of thousands of civilians caught in the middle of the fighting. In **South Sudan**, political jockeying has given way to large-scale fighting that has displaced people in the world's newest nation, and concerns loom about a possible famine. CRS is providing emergency relief to vulnerable communities in both countries.

In **Europe**, CRS is partnering with Caritas Ukraine to scale up support for thousands of people displaced by ongoing unrest in eastern **Ukraine**. Relief includes living supplies and safe housing before winter sets in and temperatures drop below zero. And, unrelenting rain in **the Balkans** in mid-May caused the worst flood devastation the region has seen in 120 years. CRS is helping families and communities with reconstruction and rebuilding.

In **Latin America**, **Haitians** prepare to mark the 5th anniversary of the 2010 earthquake, which struck January 12. The CRS recovery efforts have made tremendous strides and continue to meet the long-term needs of Haitian people.

We remain committed to the continuum of recovery that begins with immediate needs after a crisis and continues as people rebuild the foundations of their lives. Hear their Voices of Gratitude at the end of this report.

ASIA:
PHILIPPINES—TYPHOON HAGUPIT



CRS evacuated hundreds of families from Tacloban in advance of Typhoon Hagupit. Photo by Vilma Horca/CRS



CRS transitional shelters built after Typhoon Haiyan stood strong in the face of Typhoon Hagupit. Photo by Joshua Kyller/CRS

Context:

Communities across the Philippines—especially those devastated by last year’s catastrophic Typhoon Haiyan—feared the worst in the face of Typhoon Hagupit that struck the country on Saturday, December 6. In advance of the storm, CRS helped some of the 1 million people evacuate from its path on Leyte and Samar Islands, areas where CRS is already helping tens of thousands of people rebuild their homes and lives following Haiyan.

The category 3 storm of Hagupit, known locally as Ruby, lost some of its strength over the weekend as it moved northwest across the country, where it was expected to hover for 3 days with sustained winds of 108 mph and heavy rain. The greatest concern is the impact of prolonged rains that can lead to dangerous flooding and landslides in mountainous and densely urban areas. Early reports estimate 4.5 million people are affected across 14 provinces, with the heaviest damage so far in central Samar, where CRS has a base of 120 staff.

CRS Response:

CRS field teams are fanning out across hard-hit areas to evaluate the scale of damage from Typhoon Hagupit, and preparing for more damage from landslides or floods in the coming days. CRS has committed an initial \$100,000 for emergency activities, and will identify funding priorities as needs become clear. CRS is working closely with its local Catholic partners across the country. With 300 staff already working in the Philippines, CRS is well positioned to launch immediate, quality support that is flexible to the realities on the ground, and designed to support people’s safety, dignity and lasting recovery.

Latest Field Highlights:

- CRS transitional shelters, built after Typhoon Haiyan to weather heavy storms, stood strong in the face of Hagupit.
- Logistics of delivering aid will likely face some challenges: At least 92 domestic flights have been cancelled, airports in southeastern Luzon and eastern Visayas are closed, and ferry services have been suspended in all ports.
- CRS field teams say streets are clogged by debris in central Samar, making access to some areas difficult.
- CRS has prepositioned living supplies, water and sanitation, and shelter materials for thousands ready to be deployed.
- Catholic Churches provided refuge to 10,000 people in Palo. In Samar, 804 people took refuge at a Bishop’s residence.

Disaster Preparedness and Durable Shelters Save Lives: In countries like the Philippines that are prone to natural disasters, CRS works with communities, partners, governments and other actors well in advance of crises to mitigate a storm’s impact, help communities recover, and strengthen their resilience to future disasters. In the case of Typhoon Hagupit, evacuations took place in the hours and days before the storm, and communities were told where they could find safe shelter. The local Church and government had established evacuation sites. Experience shows that every \$1 spent on disaster preparedness saves \$7 to \$10 in disaster response.

The quality of emergency rebuilding and recovery is essential for community resilience. The transitional shelters CRS has helped communities to rebuild since Typhoon Haiyan are designed to be resistant to heavy storms, made with local materials, and adaptable to people’s changing lives as they recover their assets. The 3,178 CRS transitional shelters built in the past year stood strong in the face of Hagupit’s heavy winds and rain.

WEST AFRICA: EBOLA CRISIS



*Naomi Tiklotape receives training and equipment at Saint Barbara Ann, a clinic CRS supports in Monrovia, Liberia.
Photo by Michael Stulman/CRS*



Context:

As of December 2014, the World Health Organization has reported 17,290 cases of Ebola and 6,128 deaths across West Africa. Ebola is a hemorrhagic fever caused by a virus that spreads through contact with bodily fluids of an infected person. Because medical services are overwhelmed by the virus, communities are experiencing more illness and mortality from conditions unrelated to Ebola, including malaria and childbirth. People who are sick with Ebola—as well as survivors, orphans and health workers—have faced community rejection. Local economies are suffering because people have lost jobs and purchasing power. Restrictions on movement have made it difficult for people to access markets.

CRS Response:

CRS is supporting critical programs in the three most affected countries—Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone—to respond to people’s immediate as well as long-term needs. Priorities include:

Safe, Accessible Health Care: Providing personal protection equipment and cleaning supplies to workers at church health facilities. Training health care workers on safe screening, care of suspected Ebola patients and risk-prevention practices.

Lifesaving Hygiene Practices: Distributing household hygiene kits in hot spots and install public hand-washing stations in markets, churches, mosques and other locations. Supporting staffing, medicines and supplies at health facilities for routine health care.

Awareness and Social Mobilization: Conducting house-to-house visits to discuss preventing Ebola through safe practices. Developing educational messages for radio and television. Organizing and training parish volunteers to conduct grassroots awareness campaigns. Involving priests and imams in educational outreach in churches and mosques.

Food Assistance and Livelihoods Support: Providing food assistance. Developing agriculture programs—likely to include access to seeds and tools—to provide local food and income.

CRS Impact to Date:

- Hygiene kits and hand washing stations for 8,500 families
- Training for 1,600 community and religious leaders and 2,600 volunteers to carry out information campaigns
- Awareness messaging to more than 2 million people
- Reopening of a 150-bed Catholic hospital in Monrovia and construction of a holding center in Sierra Leone
- Food assistance for 143,000 people and discharge kits for 3,000 Ebola survivors
- Safe burials for 7,000 people
- Training and equipment for 3,000 health workers at 200 facilities that will ensure health care for 3 million people



In Koinadugu, Sierra Leone, CRS has constructed a holding center where patients are first screened for Ebola so everyone has safe access to health care. Photo by Maurice Boima for CRS

AFRICA'S SILENT EMERGENCIES: CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC AND SOUTH SUDAN



Archbishop Dieudonne Nzapalainga of Bangui, Central African Republic, visits with displaced families. Photo by Matthieu Alexandre for Caritas Internationalis



South Sudanese refugees register for support with CRS in neighboring Uganda. Photo by Ric Francis for CRS

Central African Republic

Context: Nearly 2 years of violent civil strife between two groups battling for political control has paralyzed community life. More than 5,000 people have been killed as the Seleka and anti-balaka groups attack each other and carry out human rights violations on civilians in the line of fire. Nearly 1 million people have been displaced. **More recently** in rural Boda, the arrival of local authorities—combined with a promise by anti-balaka groups to lay down their weapons—has led to humanitarian access to the “Red Zone,” an area previously off limits due to security concerns. The Red Zone has been uninhabited since January 2014 and contains the largest number of destroyed houses in Boda. In mid-December, CRS will coordinate outreach campaigns with civil, military and police authorities to encourage the return of displaced populations.

CRS Response and Priorities: CRS teams and partners work bravely in dangerous conditions to provide relief and care for thousands of people. Emergency support includes shelter, food, living supplies, agricultural recovery and conflict resolution.

CRS Impact to Date:

- Emergency food supplies for 2,400 families; seeds and farming tools to 8,172 families; shelter kits for 2,437 families
- Conflict resolution training and trauma healing workshops for 800 interfaith and civil society leaders
- Technical training for 250 families on how to prepare land for rebuilding and place latrines
- Living supplies for 10,723 families; firewood to 700 families in the Muslim enclave in Boda
- Workshops on post-harvest handling with farmer groups continue in over 20 demonstration sites
- Support for logistics, distribution, staff training and other infrastructure improvements for Caritas partners
- Construction startup of a community health center and community radio
- [Repair of two bridges](#) allowed access to 32 villages, with 2,000 people, previously unreachable by aid

South Sudan

Context: In the world’s newest country of South Sudan, tensions escalated in July 2013 when President Salva Kiir reshuffled the cabinet and dismissed Vice President Riek Machar. The political conflict soon expanded to fighting among ethnic groups. Thousands of people have been killed and 1.7 million have fled their homes in Jonglei, Unity and Upper Nile states, with 450,000 living as refugees. Farmers haven’t been able to plant and concerns are high of a looming famine.

CRS Response and Priorities: CRS is supporting tens of thousands of people in Jonglei and Awerial states. Priorities include transitional shelter; emergency living supplies; water, sanitation and hygiene; and conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

CRS Impact to Date:

- Distributed 566 metric tons of food to 22,595 people, and seeds and tools to 2,405 families
- Gave nutritional supplements to 3,625 pregnant and nursing mothers, and to children under 5
- Provided emergency shelter supplies to 10,603 families; constructed 693 shelters
- Promoted hygiene and safe drinking water to 78,003 individuals; built more than 80 emergency community latrines with hand-washing stations; drilled six boreholes and repaired eight boreholes

THE MIDDLE EAST: IRAQ, SYRIA AND GAZA



Mother and daughter live in a tent at St. Elijah Church in Erbil, Iraq. Photo by Daniel Etter for CRS



CRS supports education for refugees in Syria. Photo by CRS staff



Children have been traumatized by the bombings in Gaza. Photo by Shareef Sarhan for CRS

Across the Middle East, in **Iraq, Gaza and Syria**, the lives of millions of families are in peril as innocent civilians struggle in harm's way to protect their children and to live with dignity in dire conditions. They are afraid, grieving and hungry, and urgently need safe shelter, clean water, food, hygiene, medicine, education and care for their children. CRS teams are on the frontlines providing urgent relief. Our deep partnership with the Catholic Church in the region—the cradle of Christianity—allows us to respond quickly with lifesaving assistance and remain with people through their full recovery.

Iraq

Context: Millions of people remain in peril as ISIS continues to control key parts of the country. A reported 1.8 million people need emergency assistance, including 580,000 people who need shelter. Winterization help is urgently needed in the northern areas in and around Dohuk, a mountainous, cold region.

CRS Response: CRS is working in close partnership with Caritas Iraq to support 50,000 people in northern Iraq, with plans to expand its reach as resources and funding allow. CRS and Caritas Iraq have opened joint offices in Erbil and Dahuk. We've provided food, living supplies and winter materials to 4,200 families. In the coming months, CRS will reach an additional 3,000 families with winter supplies and provide transitional shelter support.

Syria

Context: Now in its 4th year, the Syrian civil war continues to devastate people's lives. The brutal war has killed 140,000 people, displaced 7 million people within Syria and forced 2.5 million to flee to other countries.

CRS Response: CRS is responding across the region—primarily in Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt and Iraq—to support Syrians and communities affected by the influx of refugees. Current CRS programs are assisting more than 700,000 war-affected Syrians and vulnerable host community members to meet diverse immediate and long-term needs, including food, shelter, living supplies, medical care, livelihoods support, education and trauma counseling.

Gaza

Context: Fifty-two days of intense fighting last summer between Israel and Palestinian militants caused massive loss of life and infrastructure damage throughout the Gaza Strip. Along Gaza's eastern border, entire neighborhoods have been reduced to rubble. At least 2,186 Palestinians were killed (69 percent civilians), including 516 children; and 66 Israeli soldiers and 5 civilians in Israel were killed. A staggering 108,000 people in Gaza lost their homes.

CRS Response: CRS is providing urgent assistance and help for people to rebuild their lives. Priorities include: Shelter repair and reconstruction; livelihoods; water, sanitation and hygiene; and education. The rebuilding of transitional shelters is well underway. CRS has provided hygiene kits to 7,000 families, emergency relief packages to 6,000 families, and food vouchers to 400 families. CRS restocked medical supplies at Gaza's Ahli Arab Hospital and Caritas Jerusalem's network of clinics, and provided 10,000 middle school students with backpacks and school supplies. Using cash-for-work, CRS is repairing 30 damaged kindergartens and helping 365 farmers rehabilitate their land. CRS is also providing counseling to staff, partners and communities.

EUROPE



Homes in Bosnia were buried by landslides in May 2014. Photo by Fuad Ercho for CRS



A mother and child receive CRS support after fleeing violence in Crimea. Photo courtesy of Caritas Ukraine

UKRAINE

Context: Since conflict began in the eastern Donbas Region of Ukraine in April 2014, at least 379,059 people have been displaced within the country and 426,995 people have fled to neighboring countries, primarily Russia. A reported 3,724 people have been killed in eastern Ukraine. An estimated 5.1 million people continue to live in conflict-affected areas. Although the warring factions signed a cease-fire in September, the agreement is fragile, and gunfire and shelling happen regularly in the disputed provinces of Donetsk and Luhansk. Semi-autonomous governments—Donetsk People’s Republic and the Luhansk People’s Republic—have been established in the disputed regions. Displaced and vulnerable families need supplies and shelter for winter. The United Nations reports that Ukraine’s pharmaceutical supply is nearly gone. Many displaced families have spent the past few months in camps they will soon be forced to leave.

CRS Response: In coordination with Caritas Europa, CRS is supporting emergency programs in the East and West to assist displaced families. Priorities include: food, water and living supplies; shelter supplies and support; psychological support and trauma healing; preparation for long-term needs, including resettlement options and livelihoods.

CRS Impact to Date:

- Emergency living supplies, potable water and food baskets for 1,400 uprooted families
- Staff recruitment, training and procedures for Caritas Ukraine
- Winter supplies and support for 3,100 families

The Balkans

Context: In mid-May, the Balkan region received as much rain in a 3-day period as it normally gets in 3 months, resulting in major floods and deadly landslides. A reported 53 people died, 43,000 houses were damaged or destroyed, and some areas lost 75 percent of crops. Damages across Serbia as well as Bosnia and Herzegovina exceeded \$2 billion—a staggering sum for two countries already mired in unemployment, stagnant economic growth and high debt.

CRS Response and Priorities: CRS has been in both countries for more than 15 years so we were able to respond immediately to the disaster. Program priorities include shelter repair, water and sanitation, and livelihoods support for 1,650 vulnerable families in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and for 1,772 families in Serbia.

CRS Impact to Date:

Water and Sanitation: Across the two countries, hundreds of homes were disinfected and dehumidified and another 1,380 families received information/instructions on cleaning, disinfecting, and drying.

Shelter: Repair or reconstruction of 171 houses in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In Serbia, cash grants for shelter support provided 1,241 with funds to repair damaged houses, replace assets, and cover other key household expenses such as medical bills, school fees and heat.

Livelihoods: In Bosnia and Herzegovina, 300 farmers received corn and vegetable seeds to replant their fields. In Serbia, 2,218 farmers received grants to restart agricultural activities. CRS’ repair of a critical Veterinary Center in Samac, Bosnia and Herzegovina helped 80 families improve the health of their livestock. And, the provision of 20 grants in the amount of \$8,000 each is helping bring together community members across ethnic and religious divides to lead recovery activities.

Infrastructure: In Bosnia and Herzegovina, CRS is helping to repair the Bare-Kostajnica Bridge, which will provide more secure access to the town market and services for 5,000 people. In Maglaj, CRS is repairing the Liješnica-Donji Bradići road that will enable 1,950 people in the rural area to regain secure road access.

Voices of Gratitude



“We felt that we were not forgotten. Whatever thanking words we had to say, it was too humble. This shelter is amazing happiness for us. It is safety. Happiness is safety—when there is no fear, when you sleep without fear, and when your children are close and safe. Home is life. It is the family. It is the spirit of the life. It gathers all of us.”

—Abu Hussein (pictured with wife, Hend),
CRS transitional shelter recipient in Gaza

Photo by Caroline Brennan/CRS

“When we talk about headache, it's severe. It feels like your head is almost exploding. The weakness is intense. You cannot command your body. Nothing is responding. You see yourself becoming helpless. You just see yourself dying. As a doctor, I knew the chances were slim. Now [that I have survived] I'm more committed than ever. God is helping me help others.”

—Dr. Omeonga Senga
Ebola Survivor and General Surgeon
St. Joseph's Catholic Hospital, Monrovia, Liberia

Photo by Michael Stulman/CRS



“If you think that God didn't give you everything you need, just touch your wrist and feel your pulse. Sometimes I think, Why am I still here and others are not? I know I have a mission. I'm waiting for God to show me what else is in his plan for me.”

—Ida Vallera
Typhoon Haiyan Survivor
San Joaquin, Palo, Philippines

Photo by Jen Hardy/CRS

Thank You