



children first.

# Humanitarian Emergencies

In 2016, 1 of every 4 children in the world was living in a country affected by emergencies.

From deadly natural disasters to public health emergencies and protracted conflicts, children are facing an unprecedented number of humanitarian emergencies. Some 250 million children are living in countries affected by conflict and crisis, many of them missing out on their rights to education, health and protection. Nearly 50 million children have been uprooted from their homes, fleeing war, conflict and persecution, or are on the run in search of a better, safer life. And children are increasingly the targets of war — violently attacked at home, at school and in the street.

The poorest countries feel the effects of climate change most acutely — and no one suffers more from these disasters than children. Hundreds of millions of children live in areas that are most affected, with 530 million children living in highly flood-prone zones, and 160 million children living in extremely drought-prone zones. Phenomena like El Niño exacerbate already harsh conditions and weather. The 2015–2016 El Niño effect put over 26 million children in eastern and southern Africa at risk — increasing cases of severe acute malnutrition and water shortages, and even the risk for HIV infection, as many lacked the food they needed to take HIV drugs.

Now more than ever, the international community must invest in emergency preparedness and measures to build the resilience of vulnerable populations to reduce the risks of disasters before they strike. This includes everything from shoring up public health systems to stave off



Iraqi Kurdish refugee Barzan Hassan holds one-year-old Yamar, outside their shelter in Ritsona refugee camp north of Athens, Greece.

epidemics, to pre-positioning nutrition and WASH supplies in drought and flood-prone areas. It also means investing in disaster risk assessments to understand where vulnerable communities are, providing appropriate training for local authorities, and setting up social safety nets for vulnerable families to withstand shocks and crises.

## UNICEF in Action

UNICEF is on the ground before, during and after emergencies strike, to respond quickly, and help communities build back better.

## About UNICEF

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) works in more than 190 countries and territories to put children first. UNICEF has helped save more children's lives than any other humanitarian organization by providing health care and immunizations, clean water and sanitation, nutrition, education, emergency relief and more. UNICEF USA supports UNICEF's work through fundraising, advocacy and education in the United States. Together, we are working toward the day when no children die from preventable causes and every child has a safe and healthy childhood.

For more information, visit [unicefusa.org](http://unicefusa.org).

Through its Core Commitments to Children in Humanitarian Action (the CCCs) UNICEF is dedicated to emergency preparedness, response and recovery that ensures children's rights are met, even in times of crisis.

In 2016, UNICEF responded to 344 humanitarian emergencies in 108 countries, providing life-saving health, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), education and protection services.

Through the global emergency cluster system, UNICEF leads other humanitarian partners on WASH, nutrition and gender-based violence preparedness and response, and co-leads the education cluster. In these leadership roles, UNICEF is responsible for coordinating the response, convening partners, and ensuring there are no gaps or duplications of effort in emergency response.

With program offices in 157 countries, seven regional offices, and global headquarters in six cities, UNICEF can tap into existing partnerships and systems — from heads of state down to local communities — mobilizing a fast and efficient response when disaster strikes. UNICEF is committed to reaching children no matter where they are, operating in some of the most difficult conditions and hard-to-reach places in the world, from Syria to South Sudan and beyond.

In New York, UNICEF operates a 24/7, 365-days-per-year operations center. The center is constantly monitoring the movements of UNICEF staff for their safety and security, and closely following political upheavals, conflicts, weather patterns and other threats to children and UNICEF programs. The operations center serves as a first port of call when disaster strikes, allowing UNICEF to account for staff's whereabouts and convey the latest news from the ground to senior leadership at headquarters and regional offices to help activate a timely, efficient response.

In Copenhagen, UNICEF operates the largest humanitarian warehouse in the world, and can pack and ship supplies anywhere within 48–72 hours. UNICEF also has supply hubs in Dubai, Panama, Shanghai and Djibouti, to surge supplies regionally as needed. At the country level, program teams pre-position life-saving stocks of water purification tablets, ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF), education materials, health equipment and other supplies to reach remote populations quickly in the event a disaster strikes.

UNICEF is constantly adapting to new challenges. For the first time in decades, as migrants and refugees made their way to Europe in 2015 amid the Syrian war, UNICEF reestablished programs in some European countries where the organization hadn't been operating since World War II, providing support in child-friendly spaces for those traveling in search of refuge. UNICEF values innovative approaches to do things smarter, faster, and better, and learns from past emergencies. Whether it's developing collapsible jerry cans to reach more people with clean water, or using mobile phones to track the spread of a disease, UNICEF can pivot quickly to deliver lifesaving aid to children wherever they are.

To address recent public-health emergencies — from Ebola to Zika — UNICEF launched a new Health Emergency Preparedness Initiative. The initiative provides a package of support for priority diseases, to allow for quick response rooted in evidence-based approaches that can halt the spread of diseases and address the underlying drivers of an outbreak.

### 2016 UNICEF Humanitarian Action Snapshot

In 2016 emergencies, UNICEF:

- Spent \$1.6 billion in 344 humanitarian situations across 108 countries, including \$379 million for emergency supplies.
- Helped 11.7 million children access education.
- Reached 2.4 million children with treatment for severe acute malnutrition (SAM).
- Vaccinated more than 24 million children against measles.
- Provided nearly 29 million people with safe water.
- Provided psychosocial support for 3 million children.
- Helped 34,000 HIV-positive pregnant women continue their antiretroviral therapy.
- Reached 1.4 million children with cash transfers.
- Contacted 162 million people in Latin America and the Caribbean with Zika prevention messages. ●

Every \$1 invested in emergency preparedness returns \$2 in efficiency gains that reduce the risk of future disasters.