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# Crisis and Conflict

## Facilitating assistance and protection in humanitarian settings

In 2021, a record **1 in 33 people** worldwide will need humanitarian assistance and protection. This is a significant increase from the 1 in 45 people in need last year, already the highest figure in decades.

### The Problem

Compared to a decade ago, there are more humanitarian emergencies affecting the lives of more people, and these emergencies are lasting longer: **the average length for the duration of a crisis is more than nine years**. Armed conflict is the largest driver of humanitarian need followed by natural disasters, famine, epidemics, and man-made causes.

These crises have caused displacement to double over the last 10 years. Now, more than **80 million** have been forced to flee their homes. These populations require significant support to achieve durable solutions to their displacement—including either safe and voluntary returns, integration into host communities, or resettlement—and to recover and rebuild their lives in peace and dignity.

The **global COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated humanitarian need**, triggering the **deepest global recession since the 1930s** and creating a cascade of secondary impacts, including soaring food prices, lost income and education and interrupted access to aid, services, and

safety just when it's needed most. Everyone has felt these effects, but none more than the people already in need of humanitarian assistance before the pandemic began.

Despite more efficient, effective humanitarian responses, **resources are not keeping pace with needs, and the most vulnerable communities are bearing the brunt of funding gaps**. In 2020, the international community provided just **46 percent** of required humanitarian resources, hamstringing humanitarians' ability to meet pre-existing humanitarian needs and respond adequately to new emergencies around the world.

As urgently as the humanitarian community requires resources, **funding alone is not enough**. Governments and non-state actors impose access constraints and bureaucratic impediments that make responding to crises more challenging. Foreign policy decisions can exacerbate civilian harm and rights abuses, while diplomacy to resolve conflicts and support recovery is often insufficient.

Violations of international humanitarian law—including the targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure—continue with impunity, threatening the lives of innocent people, compromising humanitarian response and hampering communities’ abilities to recover from conflict for years to come.

The costs of these shortcomings are not borne equally; they disproportionately fall on the most vulnerable populations. For example, conflicts and other emergencies can exacerbate gender inequalities, uniquely affecting women and girls. Adolescent girls in conflict zones are [90 percent](#) more likely to be out of school, and [70 percent](#) of women in humanitarian settings are likely to experience gender-based violence.

### The Solution

The United States has always been a leading global humanitarian donor, and providing humanitarian assistance is a manifestation of the core values that define us as a nation. Moreover, we know that when the U.S. speaks out or steps up, other countries follow.

**That means that the U.S. government is uniquely positioned to address this era’s humanitarian challenges and leverage its standing as a global leader to reduce human suffering. The U.S. Government can put humanitarian action at the center of its foreign policy by providing robust funding, engaging in diplomatic efforts to prevent and resolve crises, while taking bold action to promote human rights, civilian protection, and humanitarian action around the world. In this way, the U.S. can multiply the effects of CARE’s staff, who work in challenging conditions to deliver lifesaving assistance and protection to the people who need it most.**

### Next Steps

**CARE urges the U.S. Government to:**

- Increase its diplomatic efforts to resolve the root causes of conflict, crisis, and displacement that precipitate humanitarian need.



- Restore American credibility and leadership in the effort to address global forced displacement by expanding resettlement, providing financial support to refugee-hosting countries and countries of origin, and reducing barriers to services and aid for displaced communities.
- Ensure the protection of civilians is a first-order priority in the United States’ conduct of hostilities, security relationships, and its diplomacy, and be a vocal advocate of global accountability to, and compliance with, international humanitarian and human rights law.
- Safeguard humanitarian access and reduce operational and regulatory impediments to safe, efficient and needs-based responses, ensuring humanitarian considerations are paramount in the implementation of counter-terrorism measures and sanctions regimes.
- Robustly fund humanitarian accounts that save lives, build resilience, and foster self-reliance, and encourage peer donors to scale up funding to address the significant, growing gap in global humanitarian response resources.