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Mercy-USA News

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The War on Gaza by the Horrific Numbers

The military campaign on Gaza that began on October 7, 2023 has created a humanitarian catastrophe beyond anyone’s imagination. According to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, IPC, a multi-stakeholder initiative to

improve analysis and decision-making on food security and nutrition around the world, over 90% of Gazans face high levels of acute food insecurity. This is the highest share of people facing *Continued on page 2...*

Mercy-USA for Aid and Development

is a nonprofit relief and development organization dedicated to alleviating human suffering and supporting individuals and their communities in their efforts to become more self-sufficient.

Incorporated in 1988, Mercy-USA’s projects focus on improving health, nutrition and access to safe water, as well as promoting economic and educational growth around the world.

- Registered with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
- Special Consultative Status with the United Nations
- Member of InterAction

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Nairobi, Kenya	Antakya, Turkey



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Gaza Sees Little Hope for End to Suffering

Continued from page 1...these extremely dire statistics that the IPC has ever classified for any given area or country.

According to multiple sources including the Palestinian Ministry of Health on January 28, 2024, at least 26,400 Palestinians had been killed in the Gaza Strip since October, 7th. At least 10,000 of those killed were children. Another 65,087, including at least 8,600 children were injured. At least 8,000 Palestinians had been reported missing.

According to data at the time of publication from the United Nation's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the World Health Organization and the Palestinian government, more

than half of Gaza's homes, 360,000 residential units, had been destroyed or severely damaged. 378 places of learning had been destroyed; only 14 of 35 hospitals were partially open and 122 ambulances had been destroyed or damaged. 11 bakeries were destroyed.

Mercy-USA has partnered with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East for fifteen years providing support for education projects, healthcare and emergency relief. So far, we have supported emergency relief including healthcare for some of the 1.7 million displaced people in Gaza.

With our local Gaza partner, United Friends Association (UFA), Mercy-USA will begin distributing food aid and water in March, 2024.

Drought + Floods = Disaster

In Somalia, Drought Causes Displacement and a Struggle to Survive

Bisbaas and her family were forced to leave their village where the drought made it impossible to survive as farmers two years ago. They have been living in the Barwaqo camp for internally displaced persons (IDP) in Somalia without safe access to clean water. Their only source of water has been at a distant river. The walk was dangerous and her children were sickened from the contaminated water.



Mercy-USA instituted a water provision system that ensures 150 households receive a daily allocation of approximately 12 gallons of clean water. This purified water serves the daily needs of a family for drinking, cooking, bathing and cleaning. Clean water is not only essential for drinking, it's vital for overall health and hygiene of a family living in difficult circumstances like an IDP camp.

"After water was brought to our camp, everything changed. My

children now drink clean, cold water daily and they don't get sick. Cleaning and bathing are simple and best of all, my daughters will be safe from the risk of fetching river water."

Mercy-USA's emergency water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) response is made possible thanks to the generous support of the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO).

Floods Wipe Out a Farming Family's Entire Way of Life in Somalia

Farhia and her family's hardship began with severe floods that devastated numerous villages in the Hiran region in Somalia during the last months of 2023. As a result, Farhia's husband lost his farming job which was the family's sole source of income. To make matters worse, their home was also destroyed by the floods. Forced to look for help to survive, they arrived at an IDP camp looking for assistance in feeding their children.

After a few months, Farhia brought her twelve-month-old son, Mohamed, to the Mercy-USA Bunda Weyn Nutrition Center. The baby had been losing weight for three months before she brought him in to be evaluated.

Farhia shared her story, saying, "The only sustenance my son had was breast milk, but when I again became pregnant, my milk supply decreased and Mohamed began to be dehydrated and started losing weight. When we were forced to

move to the outskirts of the town due to the floods, his condition deteriorated so I rushed to this facility for help."

Mohamed was screened by the staff and diagnosed with severe acute malnutrition. He was immediately enrolled in the Outpatient Therapeutic Program and received lifesaving nutritional treatment in the form of Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF).



Farhia said, "This is my second week bringing him to the facility, and his condition is improving, and his appetite is returning. I never thought he would be able to recover so quickly! The Mercy-USA health staff screened him, tested his appetite, and provided him with RUTF, and that really saved him. I appreciate how the nutrition staff at the facility worked hard for my son's health."

Mercy-USA, with generous support from UNICEF, is actively assisting malnourished children with lifesaving nutritional support in the Hiran region of Somalia.

Another Major Shelter Project Completed in Syria



One of the three camps transformed by the Dignified Shelter Project before construction.



The same camp after infrastructure and construction was completed.



Water tower during construction

750 families, many who were directly impacted by earthquakes in north-west Syria received a new home to call their own.

The project targeted three camps where entire tent encampments were transformed from disheveled and worn shelter tents to one with a sense of community, security and comfort.

With generous support of the UNHCR, this major project involved providing dignified shelters with steel metal frame sandwich panels, a sleeping room, kitchen and private bathroom. These units not only provide insulation from the elements in winter and summer, they provide a way to prepare food, bathe and maintain hygiene and health.

In addition, each camp is supported by essential infrastructure enhancements such as road graveling, the construction of drainage and sewage networks, a water network with a high-water tank, solar streetlights, and a fence.

The shelter units are designed for easy assembly and disassembly, so if a family is able to return to their land or farm, the shelter is theirs to take with them. We are proud to offer this more comprehensive and resilient housing environment for families who have suffered from war and devastating natural disasters such as the 2023 major earthquakes that struck the region.



Abo Mohamed's family in the tent they were forced to survive in during 2023.



Abo Mohamed's daughters joyfully play outside their new home.



“Last winter we never felt warm...”

When Abo Mohamed, a father of five lost his livelihood and home, he had no choice but to take his family to seek shelter in the Al Fardos tent encampment in NW Syria. “Last winter was a misery. We spent every day feeling cold because the tent was almost always soaking wet. We’d pray for sunny weather just so we could put out the mattresses and blankets to dry”, he said.

2024 will be a drastic improvement to the quality of life for Abo Mohamed’s family and many others who have new semi-permanent shelter units. The snug little homes are safe from the winter weather, especially the annual rains that bring mud and water into tents. They will no longer worry about summer’s influx of insects and snakes either. “The children feel more comfortable now and their mother is happy to have a space that is easier to keep clean”.

The dignity and security that comes with a home that has a bathroom, kitchen, walls and windows with a door that securely locks is appreciated by these families who have struggled for so long.

Mercy-USA Staff and Volunteers Reach Out to Neighbors in Need



In SE Michigan, the harsh winter of 2023-24 created many challenges for society's most vulnerable. Mercy-USA for Aid and Development believes in the power of local communities to make a difference for neighbors in need.

With valued local partners, Mercy-USA organized seven packaging

events that resulted in the assembly of 1,000 hygiene packages, over 150 feminine hygiene packages, and 300 winter warmth packages.

In addition to the kits provided by Mercy-USA, twelve donation boxes were strategically placed across Southeast Michigan, with seven in places of worship, three



in educational institutions, and two in local businesses. The response from donors was overwhelming, providing a wide range of brand-new personal care and winter warmth items. From hygiene products to essential clothing items and everyday use items, the diverse donations from these boxes helped us meet the varying needs of beneficiaries. \$50 gift cards were also distributed to enable beneficiaries to purchase coats or other winter items for a specific fit.

The items collected from these donation boxes were distributed based on established needs to eleven shelters and transitional homes across Washtenaw County and Wayne County. This targeted approach ensured that the support reached those who needed it the most, bringing warmth and comfort during the winter months.

The generosity of donors not only provided essential items but also conveyed a message of hope and solidarity to those facing housing insecurity. Contributions made a tangible difference in the lives of individuals and families in the Detroit community, one package at a time.



While distributing hygiene packages at the Bryant Community Center, Mercy-USA staff and volunteers helped package food baskets that included our hygiene kits as a welcome addition for community members who benefited.



Where We Work • mercyusa.org



Albania

English and computer skills training for orphans
Read to Succeed program for school-age children and teens



Bangladesh & Rohingya Refugees

Emergency Relief
Livelihood Support
Seasonal food aid



Bosnia and Herzegovina

Vocational and career training for orphans, at-risk teens and young adults
Assistance to special needs students
Read to Succeed program for school-age children



Ethiopia

Seasonal food aid
Emergency Relief



The Gaza Strip

Food Aid
Emergency Relief
With grant funding to UNRWA, support for a special school for blind and visually-impaired elementary school-aged children.
Health and vision screenings



Kenya

Seasonal food aid
Emergency Relief



Lebanon

Mobile Medical Clinic for Syrian Refugees and their hosts in Wadi Khalid
Nutritional support for mothers and children
Cash assistance for vulnerable Lebanese and Syrian Refugees
Seasonal food aid



Pakistan

Seasonal food aid
Emergency Relief



Somalia

Approximately 800 new or rehabilitated wells and other water resources for access to clean drinking water throughout Somalia including emergency drought relief
Nutritional support and health services for mothers and children
Hygiene and sanitation training and promotion
Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention



Syria

Food Aid
Winterization projects for vulnerable children and their families
Semi-permanent homes for Syrian families
Nutritional support and health services
Hygiene and sanitation training and promotion



United States

Seasonal food aid
Support for refugees
Support for Detroit area disadvantaged students
Emergency Relief



Yemen

Food aid
Emergency Relief

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