



# DISASTER AND HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

## THE CHALLENGES

In the wake of a hurricane, earthquake, tsunami or humanitarian crisis, people are left reeling, devastated by the loss of family, friends and their homes. In the immediate aftermath, they struggle to find the food, water and shelter they need to survive. Emergencies like these are on the rise.

In 2022, approximately 274 million people needed humanitarian assistance. This number shattered previous records, and demonstrated the extent to which COVID-19, the climate crisis and other complex political and humanitarian crises are all converging to create an unprecedented global scale of need. The number of storms and floods around the world, for example, both increased more than 20% since the last decade. The climate crisis, if unchecked, could push up to 130 million people into poverty over the next 10 years.

What's more, these crises result in disasters that disproportionately affect communities in the Global South. While COVID-19, the climate crisis, food insecurity, inflation and conflict all have a dire effect on all people, marginalized populations—including women and girls, Indigenous people, ethnic and religious minorities, rural populations, people employed in the informal economy (including sex workers), refugees and internally displaced people and LGBTQI+ communities—are disproportionately impacted. Governments have also used these crises as an excuse to violate the rights and disregard the needs of these groups, deepening inequity and injustice.

Since 1985, AJWS has responded to **52** humanitarian crises and natural disasters with **\$41.8 MILLION** in emergency grants and support for communities to rebuild and recover.



Members of Samburu Women Trust distribute food in northern Kenya, where catastrophic droughts worsened by the climate crisis have left millions at risk of starvation. *Photo courtesy of Samburu Women Trust.*

## HOW WE MAKE CHANGE

AJWS responds rapidly after disasters by mobilizing financial support from our donors and sending aid directly to our partners on the ground. We listen to local organizations and activists who know their communities best, ensuring that the right kinds of help will quickly reach those who need it most.

We fill critical gaps in aid by prioritizing survivors from marginalized communities, recognizing that disasters exacerbate existing inequalities and further compound issues such as poverty and food insecurity. AJWS also responds to smaller disasters that don't make the U.S. news or elicit international aid responses. These floods, mudslides and typhoons are devastating—and the aid we provide is often the only support survivors receive.

AJWS helps build resilience for the future. Because our partners and their communities are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of the climate crisis, we invest in projects that prepare for and mitigate the effects of climate disasters. And we stay the course—supporting long-term efforts to create lasting change as communities recover, build more equitable societies and grow more resilient against future threats.

# CRISIS RESPONSE IN ACTION AROUND THE WORLD

## EARTHQUAKE AND DEMOCRATIC CRISIS IN HAITI

In August 2021, a 7.2 magnitude earthquake struck **Haiti**. This was the second massive quake in just over a decade, and came right on the heels of the collapse of Haiti's government and the assassination of its former president. An earthquake of this magnitude would have caused terrible damage to any nation, but in a country with a limited government to respond, it was nothing short of catastrophic. In this void of leadership, AJWS grantees and other local organizations have been a vital lifeline to communities. They launched critical relief campaigns to aid families near the epicenter, all while continuing to lead crucial work to resuscitate Haiti's democracy and pull the country out of this current crisis.



When a catastrophic earthquake struck Haiti in 2021, AJWS grantee The Socio-Cultural Movement for Haitian Workers (MOSCTHA) organized a mobile health clinic to treat survivors. MOSCTHA was also instrumental in responding to the 2010 quake that hit Port-au-Prince. *Photo courtesy of MOSCTHA.*

## THE CLIMATE CRISIS AND GLOBAL HUNGER

In 2022, the deadly convergence of the climate crisis and disruptions in the food supply chain created a **global** hunger emergency. AJWS responded in full force, supporting grantees like **Samburu Women Trust** in **Kenya** to distribute food, press for government aid and help communities learn new ways to make a living. Indeed, dozens of our grantees in the global climate justice movement are addressing the root causes of the crisis and ensuring that those most severely affected have the tools to build resilience, survive and thrive.

## COVID-19 RESPONSE

COVID-19 has struck a devastating blow in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. The pandemic has posed an existential threat to all the vulnerable communities AJWS serves—and it has magnified inequality between rich and poor, fueled flare-ups of bigotry, increased sexual violence and exacerbated the unchecked rise of authoritarianism. AJWS mobilized swiftly and nimbly to provide our grantees with the resources to slow the spread of COVID in their communities, reduce hardships caused by the pandemic and defend human rights under fire.

For example, in **Haiti** an organization of independent journalists—**AyiboPost**—reached over 600,000 people with videos and articles teaching communities how to prevent infection. In **Senegal**, AJWS grantee **Association des Juristes Sénégalaises** is providing psychosocial support to women suffering from domestic violence linked to the pandemic. And in **Uganda**, after 23 homeless LGBTQI+ youth were violently imprisoned and falsely charged with spreading COVID-19, AJWS grantee **Human Rights and Promotion Forum (HRAPF)** mobilized emergency legal support and secured their freedom.

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American Jewish World Service  
45 West 36<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10018

📞 212.792.2900  
800.889.7146  
✉ ajws@ajws.org

🌐 ajws.org  
📘 /americanjewishworldservice  
🐦 /ajws  
📷 /americanjewishworldservice

