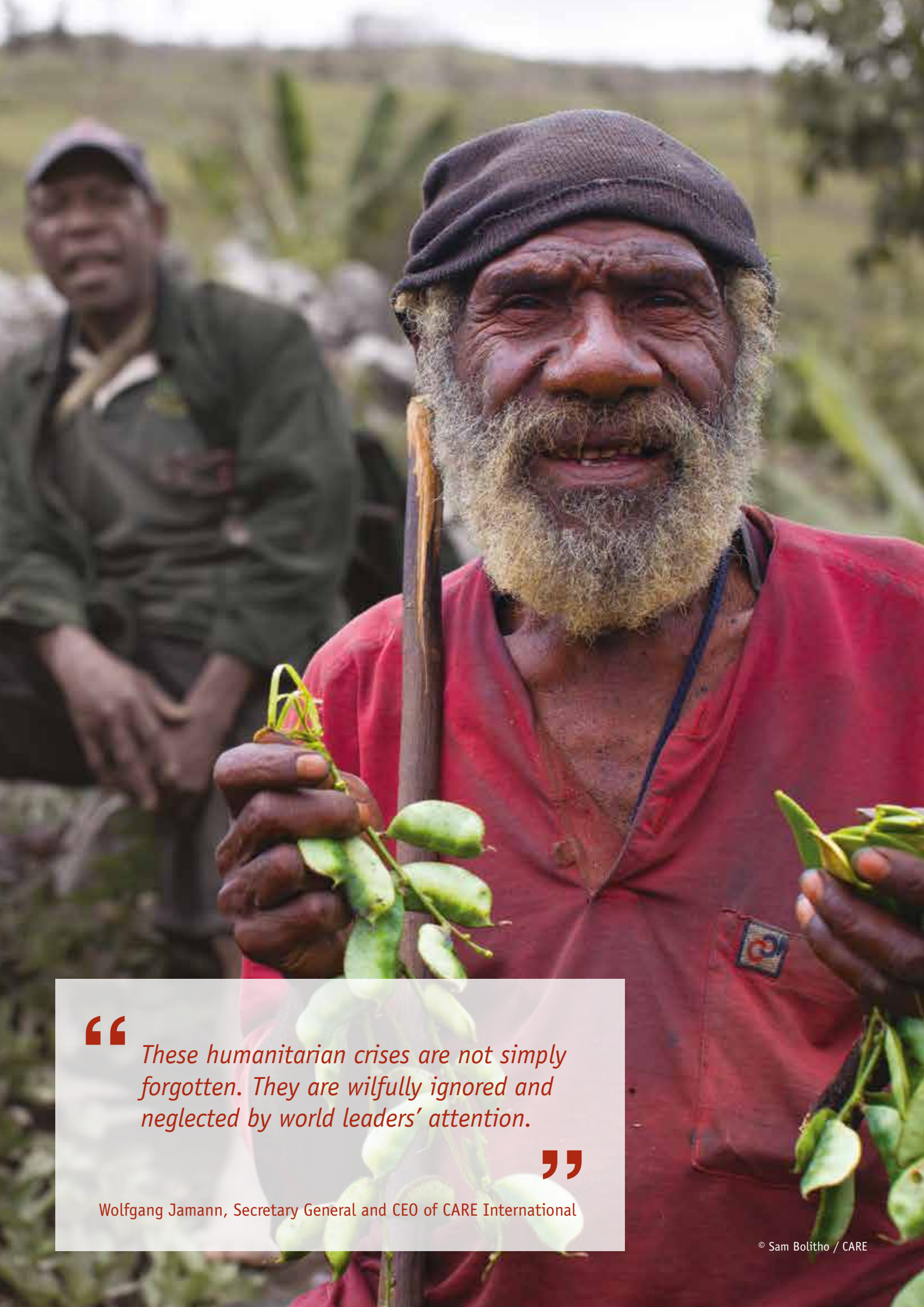


SUFFERING IN SILENCE:

The 10 most under-reported humanitarian crises of 2016





“

These humanitarian crises are not simply forgotten. They are wilfully ignored and neglected by world leaders' attention.

”

Wolfgang Jamann, Secretary General and CEO of CARE International

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Introduction

In 2016, we saw numerous news-breaking humanitarian crises.

We watched civilians in besieged Aleppo sending heart-breaking pleas for rescue. We followed in shock when yet another overloaded vessel full of desperate people sank in the Mediterranean Sea. And we witnessed the meticulously documented military offensive to retake the Iraqi city of Mosul. Yet these headlines were just the tip of an ever-growing humanitarian iceberg. Underneath these more visible crises lay many more that never made it into the news.

From natural disasters to climate-related shocks, from conflict and displacement to persecution and marginalization; crises come in all forms and affect many places, some of which we never hear about.

Media attention and fundraising for humanitarian causes are closely intertwined. Watching people suffering on TV prompts many of us to engage and donate – this is widely known as “the CNN effect.” Journalists need independent access to report from the ground. This might explain why the humanitarian situation in two “limited access” countries that rank the lowest in the World Press Freedom Index of Reporters without Borders¹ - Eritrea and North Korea - are among the top crises that received almost zero media attention in 2016.

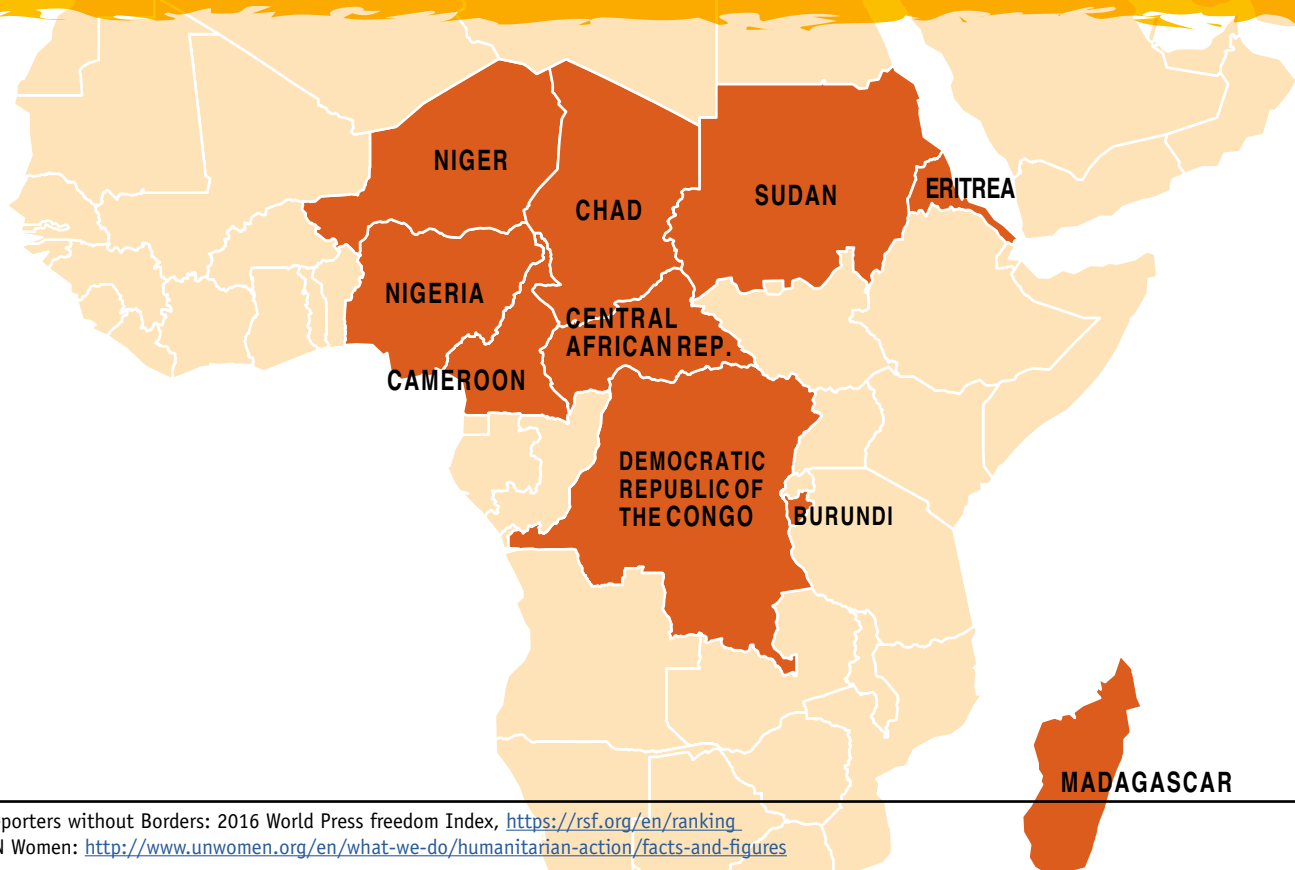
As in most disasters, women and girls are worst affected. They are often the last to eat in times of drought, they often lack the physical strength to escape natural disasters and they face sexual violence during conflicts. One in five refugee women or displaced women in complex humanitarian settings have experienced sexual violence.²

This report highlights where the global community must step up action to bring an end to human suffering and promote a world of peace and social justice.

As an aid organization, CARE International is driven to provide relief even in places where few others dare to go. Journalists also have a responsibility, given that the media has the power to set agendas, hold politicians accountable and help raise crucial funds to deliver aid.

This ranking is not meant to compare misery and suffering and place them on a scale; rather, each crisis and each human fate is unique and deserves all the support we can give.

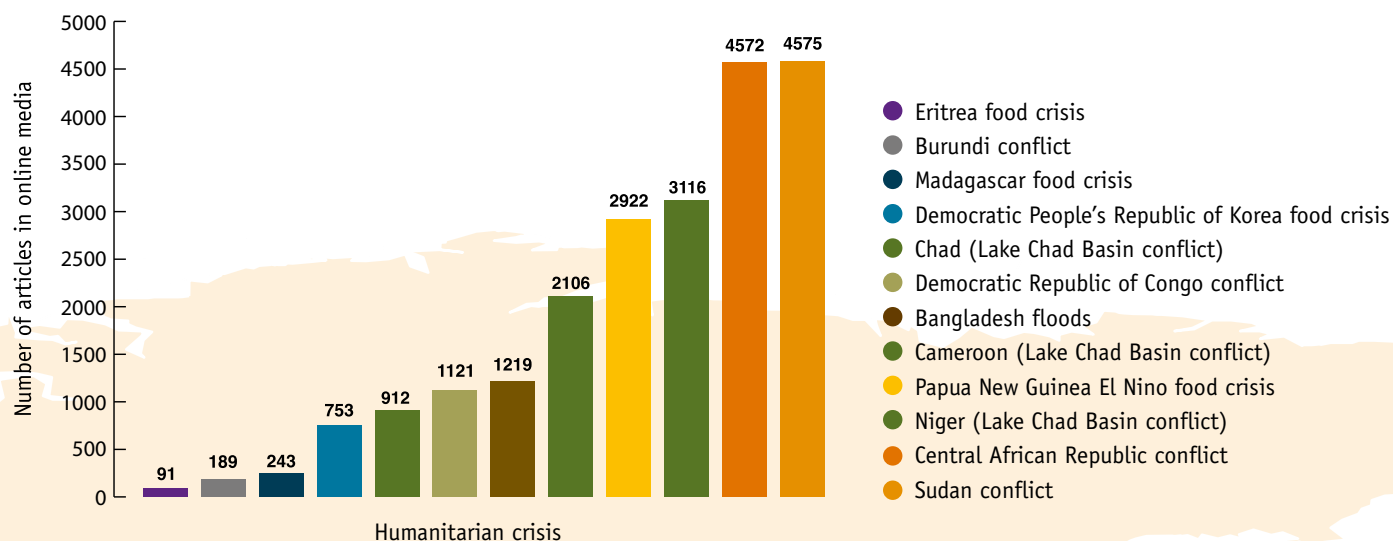
With this report, CARE International aims to shine the spotlight on those humanitarian crises that have been neglected or eclipsed by others grabbing the world’s attention. Each one of them is one too many.



¹ Reporters without Borders: 2016 World Press freedom Index, <https://rsf.org/en/ranking>

² UN Women: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/humanitarian-action/facts-and-figures>

Most-underreported crises of 2016



In the report ranking, the crises in Niger, Chad and Cameroon have been combined as they are all affected by the same regional conflict in the Lake Chad Basin.

“

Most of these crises will continue to need our attention in 2017 and the years to come.

”

Wolfgang Jamann
Secretary General and CEO of CARE International

Methodology

Using the media monitoring services of Meltwater Group, CARE International analysed those natural disasters or conflicts that received the least media attention in 2016. More than 250,000 global online sources were monitored in English, French and German. To filter according to scale, we chose countries in which at least one million people have been affected by natural or man-made disasters. The result is a list of over 30 crises that we analysed and ranked by the number of articles mentioning each, starting with the one that received the fewest.

Ranking: The 10 most under-reported disasters in 2016

1. ERITREA:

Hungry and out of reach

Little is known about Eritrea, a country almost completely cut off from the outside world.

Journalists and aid workers have no access to humanitarian data and many major aid organisations such as CARE International are not allowed to provide relief to affected people. According to UN estimates, about two million people are without adequate food supplies in this semi-arid country.³ Eritrea has been hit hard by the dry spells of El Niño. Women and children's survival is most at risk and acute malnutrition is one of the major underlying causes of death. Half of all children in Eritrea are stunted and cannot achieve their full mental and physical potential, simply because they go hungry. They are likely to suffer long-term consequences which will hamper their cognitive and physical growth.

Ongoing conflict, slow economic growth and life-long mandatory military service force many people to flee Eritrea. The UN estimates that 5,000 Eritreans leave their country each month, many of them so desperate for a better life, they risk taking the perilous route across the Sahara and the Mediterranean Sea. Eritreans constitute one of the largest groups of refugees in Europe and Africa.

³ UNICEF Eritrea: <https://www.unicef.org/appeals/eritrea.html>

© Brendan Bannon/ CARE

2 million

people are without adequate
food supplies

50%

of all children in Eritrea are stunted



2. BURUNDI:

A political conflict turned humanitarian crisis

© Brendan Bannon / CARE

Starting in 2015, the political violence in Burundi has left three million people in need of humanitarian assistance.⁴

An estimated 130,000 people are internally displaced and over 300,000 people left their home to seek safety in neighbouring countries. More than two million people do not know how to feed their families as the country experiences rising food prices while poor rains affected last year's harvest. Conflict and displacement hinder farmers to tend to their fields and women and girls to access crucial basic social services, including health care, nutrition support, water and sanitation. Half a million pregnant and breast-feeding women need urgent nutritional support.

Every four hours, one woman dies during child birth in Burundi. Burundians also have to cope with floods, landslides, storms and other natural disasters each year.

"I used to be an ethnic disrupter. I was driven by the hatred for other members who are not my ethnic group. Anyone who thought differently was my enemy", says Léon Havyarima. "My life changed completely since I joined CARE's 'peace under construction' project. I started to listen to people and became sensitive to conflicts. I now feel like a true "Mushingantahe" (a confidant in the community). In Burundi, they are recognised for their ability to resolve conflicts and mediate."

CARE Burundi is supporting local civil society organisations and peace groups. Female peace facilitators play a crucial role preventing conflict within the communities: They developed early warning mechanisms and report offensives and human rights violations so community leaders can intervene and resolve tensions immediately. Through its local partners, CARE produced the radio programme "Murikira Ukuri" (bring to light the truth) where people discuss their difficult living conditions, stigma, violence and the effects of hate speech. The show promotes messages on social cohesion, conflict management, trauma healing and the importance of a truth and reconciliation process. After a destructive flood due to the El Niño climatic cycle, CARE International and partners supported almost 5,000 people with blankets, clothes and hygiene supplies and kits for pregnant women.

3 million
people in need of humanitarian assistance.

300,000
people fled to neighbouring countries

2 million
people do not know how to feed their families

500,000
pregnant and breast-feeding women need urgent nutritional support.

DEMOCRATIC
REPUBLIC OF
THE CONGO

UGANDA
RWANDA
BURUNDI

KENYA

UNITED REP.
OF TANZANIA

⁴ Burundi Humanitarian Brief, December 2016

A photograph of a person from the waist down, walking away on a dirt path. They are carrying two large orange plastic jerrycans, one in each hand. The person is wearing red shorts and a white shirt. The background shows a line of green trees under a blue sky with some clouds.

3. MADAGASCAR:

A severe food crisis in the making

© CARE / Lucy Beck

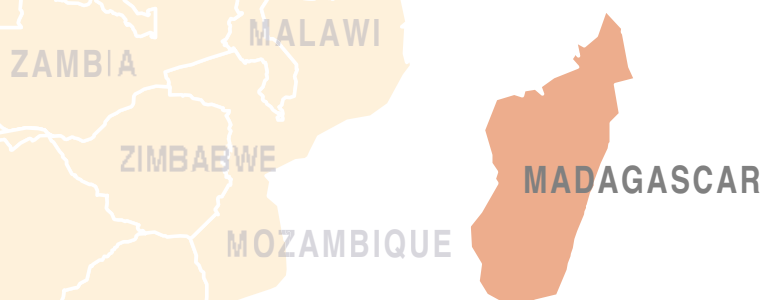
A vicious combination of consecutive years of drought and the El Niño climatic cycle has withered corn, cassava and rice fields, leaving almost 1.5 million people in southern Madagascar dependent on emergency aid.⁵ Over 330,000 people there face severe hunger and are classified as being in an “emergency phase” – just one step away from the official famine level. Eight in ten affected people are farmers who face depleted food stocks. Families are forced to sell their assets, reduce their number of meals per day and migrate to search for alternative incomes. One quarter of all children under the age of five in Grand Sud, the main affected area, are stunted. This will impact cognitive and mental growth for the rest of their lives. Girls spend many hours per day fetching water, leaving them without an opportunity to attend school.

The people of Andranogoa village in southern Madagascar have been living in arid misery for the last two years. For the main harvest season of 2015/2016 farmers lost almost all of their crops due to the lack of rain resulting from El Niño.

“We only eat cassava leaves, if I can find them. If not, we eat nothing. Yesterday someone gave me a cup of rice, today we haven’t eaten anything,” says Julienne, mother of a three-year-old daughter.

Madagascar is not the only country in Southern Africa experiencing drought due to El Niño. Overall, more than 20 million people across Malawi, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Lesotho and Swaziland are going to bed hungry each night.

CARE International is supporting nearly 350,000 people in Madagascar with money to buy food, seeds for the upcoming planting season and supplies for fisheries. Pregnant and lactating women receive crucial nutritional support to ensure their babies are well-fed.



1.5 million
people dependent on emergency aid.

330,000
people face severe hunger

⁵ RIASCO Action Plan for Southern Africa, May 2016 – April 2017

4. DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA

© CARE / Lucy Beck

No food behind locked doors

What we know about North Korea is limited to sporadic news about nuclear tests and the country's authoritarian rule.

Very little information is available about the 18 million people – 70 per cent of the population - who do not have enough to eat.⁶ Among them are more than two million children and pregnant and lactating women who are at risk of malnutrition, a severe threat to the survival of mothers and children under five. Very few international organisations are allowed to provide relief in North Korea and international journalists are rarely granted access to report from inside the country. North Korea is prone to recurring disasters such as droughts, floods and storms. The previous two years were abnormally dry, decreasing crop production by over 20 per cent from 2014 to 2015. Typhoon Lionrock wreaked havoc in August, causing destructive floods and affecting more than 600,000 people.

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

CHINA

DEM. PEOPLE'S
REP. OF KOREA

REPUBLIC
OF KOREA

JAPAN

70%

of the population -
who do not have enough to eat

2 million

children and pregnant and lactating women
are at risk of malnutrition

20%

decreased crop production from 2014 to 2015

600,000

people affected by Typhoon Lionrock

⁶ DPR Korea Needs and Priorities, UN and partners 2016

5. LAKE CHAD BASIN:

An explosive mix of conflict, hunger and displacement

The humanitarian situation in the four countries bordering Lake Chad – Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria - has deteriorated tremendously over the past years.

According to the UN, the long-running violence and military counter-offensives have affected 21 million people across the Lake Chad Basin and left nearly half of the region's population - 9.2 million people - in critical need of aid.⁷

More than six million people face severe hunger. In Nigeria, at least 55,000 people experienced famine in some of the areas completely cut off from humanitarian support. Many Nigerians fleeing violence and hunger have found shelter with host families in Cameroon, Chad, and Niger which are amongst the poorest countries in the world. In addition to ongoing drought and recurring flash floods, taking in refugees - not just from Nigeria but also from other conflict regions in the Central African Republic and Sudan - stretches host families' resources to the limit. Violent attacks by armed groups have spilled over the borders into each country, leaving fields and markets abandoned by frightened farmers and cattle breeders. Many displaced women and girls reported violent sexual attacks, and young boys are constantly afraid of being forcibly recruited to engage in the conflict.

"The armed men killed two people right in front of us. They were burning down the houses," recounts Halima, a female village leader from southern Niger. "Many refugees from Nigeria were seeking safety in our village and had been guests in our home. When the attack happened, some of the refugees were killed, others hid in the bush. I can't describe the fear we felt that night." Halima fled too, leaving her village and the upcoming harvest.

In 2016, CARE International reached 22,500 people in Cameroon, 46,000 people in Chad and more than 200,000 people in Niger with life-saving food, shelter, water, farming supplies, household and cooking items as well as hygiene kits. In Niger, CARE International established child-friendly spaces where children like Halima's can play and be children again.

21 million
people affected by conflict

9.2 million
people in critical need of aid

55,000
people experienced famine in areas cut off from humanitarian support

6 million
people face severe hunger

⁷ UN OCHA Lake Chad Basin Emergency: Revised requirement and response priorities (September - December 2016)



6. DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO:

Twenty years of war

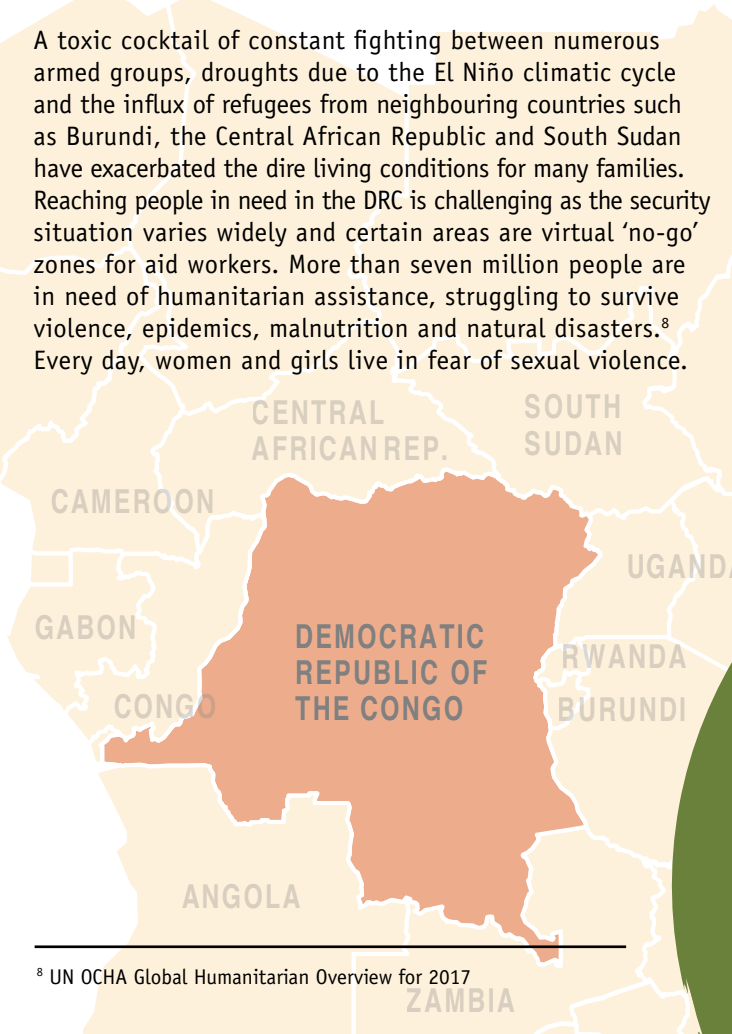
Many children and adolescents living in the Democratic Republic Congo (DRC) know nothing but conflict. The country has been in a state of humanitarian crisis for more than two decades and the recent upsurge in violence in 2016 leaves little hope for a peaceful transition in the near future.

A toxic cocktail of constant fighting between numerous armed groups, droughts due to the El Niño climatic cycle and the influx of refugees from neighbouring countries such as Burundi, the Central African Republic and South Sudan have exacerbated the dire living conditions for many families. Reaching people in need in the DRC is challenging as the security situation varies widely and certain areas are virtual 'no-go' zones for aid workers. More than seven million people are in need of humanitarian assistance, struggling to survive violence, epidemics, malnutrition and natural disasters.⁸ Every day, women and girls live in fear of sexual violence.

"Every night, I did not sleep well. I was worried about my children. I was most worried about my two daughters being raped as this happened frequently when bandits got in your house", says Kavira, a 32-year old mother of five children. When the fighting reached her village in North Kivu province Kavira fled to another town – joining the more than 1.8 million people who are displaced in many areas of DRC.

After a lull in fighting, Kavira returned to her home and participated in one of CARE DRC's Village Savings and Loans Associations. With the money she saved, she managed to cover her family's basic needs, rebuild her house, send two of her children back to school and start a small business selling salted fish.

Since 1994, CARE International has responded to various emergencies and crises in DRC. Our programs continue to economically empower women and youth and address their rights to sexual and reproductive health services.



7 million

people are in need of humanitarian assistance

1.8 million

people displaced in many areas of DRC

⁸ UN OCHA Global Humanitarian Overview for 2017



7. BANGLADESH:

When the water comes

Every year the Bangladesh monsoon brings torrential rain and floods.

What was once a welcomed natural cycle for farmers has become a dreaded event since climate change has intensified annual rainfall. Women and girls are particularly affected by flooding as many cannot swim. They are also often not allowed to leave their homes due to cultural barriers and they are more likely to experience violence, psychosocial difficulties, malnutrition and a lack of economic or educational opportunities.

In 2016, the floods affected more than four million people, destroying homes, fields and livelihoods. Families were in urgent need of food, drinking water, latrines, shelter and health support. Monoara Begum's was one of them. After her husband abandoned the family, leaving the 40-year old responsible for her three children, she was transformed from housewife to crop farmer. Initially she was doing well, cooking three meals a day for her family. Then, in July, floods destroyed her house, washed away her crops, ducks and goats, and left her water-supply contaminated.

CARE Bangladesh has reached over 28,000 people affected by last year's monsoon floods with food packs, cash grants, and shelter, water and sanitation kits to help people like Monoara both survive and recover their losses.



4 million
people affected by floods in 2016

A photograph of two men in a field. The man on the left is wearing a red cap and a grey jacket, holding a plant. The man on the right is wearing a green jacket and a blue cap, holding a plant and a small tool. They are both smiling. The background shows a hilly landscape with green vegetation.

8. PAPUA NEW GUINEA:

A drought called El Niño

© Sam Bolitho / CARE

In 2016, El Niño affected more than 60 million people across the globe.

El Niño is the world's biggest weather phenomenon, happening every few years when warm water collected in the western Pacific move back eastwards, affecting rain patterns and temperatures worldwide. In Papua New Guinea, El Niño brought a major drought and repeated frosts at high altitudes, wiping out crops and drying out water sources in a country where 80 per cent of the population depend on farming. As a result, more than 1.4 million people went hungry.⁹

"I have noticed that my children have lost weight," said Tema Piniel. "My gardens have been totally destroyed by the lack of rain. Now my husband and I drink and eat as little as we can so that our children can have more. Before, we all usually ate four to five kaukaus (sweet potatoes) each. Now the six of us share two kaukaus. We only eat in the evenings and chew sugarcane throughout the day. School has been suspended due to the water and food shortage."

CARE Papua New Guinea provided emergency relief to more than 260,000 people, distributed food supplies as well as jerry cans, water purification tablets, soap and buckets.

The good news is that the effects of El Niño have begun to subside.

CARE has supported farmers with agricultural training to become more resilient to future climatic shocks and to recover their farming activities.



80%

of the population depends on farming.

1.4 million

people went hungry.

⁹ El Niño Response Plan, PNG Disaster Management Team, April 2016



9. CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC:

A brutal conflict in the heart of Africa

© Sabine Wilke / CARE

The country lying in the heart of Africa is unknown to many. Despite its richness in natural resources, the Central African Republic has remained largely underdeveloped and suffers conflict, the latest erupting in 2013.

More than two million people, almost half of the population, are in desperate need of food and humanitarian assistance.¹⁰ Aid workers often can't reach those in need as they are regularly attacked by the various armed groups who roam the country. This is a severe violation of International Humanitarian Law that should guarantee the safety of humanitarian workers and supplies.

More than 380,000 people were forced to flee their homes since the beginning of the conflict, seeking shelter in other parts of the country or in neighbouring countries, such as Cameroon, Chad or the Democratic Republic of Congo.

"All I think about is my education," says the 17-year old Aziza, who lost her entire family in the conflict and has sought refuge in Chad. Yet she hasn't given up her dreams to become a fashion designer.

"I wake up in the morning and think of my family, but I also think about school. I pray, I do my household chores. When there is food, I eat. When there isn't, I don't." Aziza is able to go to a "child-friendly space" established by CARE where she receives food and is working hard to obtain her high school diploma.

In Chad, CARE International supported 65,000 refugees from the Central African Republic together with about 7,000 Chadians residing in host communities last year. In Cameroon, CARE supported over 63,500 refugees and host families.



2 million

people are in desperate need of food and humanitarian assistance

380,000

people were forced to flee their homes

¹⁰ UN OCHA Global Humanitarian Overview for 2017

A close-up photograph of a young child with dark skin and a large, dark, circular earplug in their left ear. The child is lying down, resting their head against a person whose arm and hand are visible. The person is wearing a blue and yellow patterned garment. The background is slightly blurred, showing a tiled floor and some colorful fabric.

10. SUDAN:

On the edge of survival

© Josh Estey / CARE

In several areas of Sudan, including Darfur, conflict has been raging for over a decade, putting almost six million people on the edge of survival today.¹¹

Many are facing extreme hunger. More than two million children are acutely malnourished. In addition, the country faces regular floods and droughts.

Almost three million Sudanese are displaced within their country and many others have sought safety in neighbouring states. At the same time, a quarter of a million South Sudanese have fled to Sudan to escape the violence that has ensnared their own country for the past three years.

After the conflict erupted in Jabal Marra in Darfur, 19-year old Aisha fled to a camp for displaced people with her two young children. She was safe, yet had no income. When her 11-month old daughter Fatima became malnourished she had no money to take her to the hospital. Aisha's desperate situation turned when a camp leader brought her to a CARE International supported feeding centre, where Fatima recovered within a week.

CARE International staff in Sudan have supported over half a million people with water and sanitation, nutrition, health and economic support. Sudan's instability has left many people without opportunities to earn an income, and the youth are frustrated by the lack of employment chances. CARE works with local communities to provide vocational trainings and microcredits. The years of conflict have taken a destructive toll on health facilities, and skilled health workers are reluctant to deploy to such a risky location. CARE works to ensure people have access to crucial health support. Pregnant women and lactating mothers receive crucial nutritional support to ensure that their children don't suffer from the life-long consequences of malnutrition. In camps for displaced people in rural areas, CARE International staff establish water systems and train communities on how to operate and maintain their own water and sanitation supplies.

6 million
people at the edge of survival

2 million
children are acutely malnourished

3 million
displaced within their country

250,000
South Sudanese have fled to Sudan
to escape the violence

LIBYA

EGYPT

SAUDI
ARABIA

CHAD

SUDAN

ERITREA

YEMEN

DJIBOUTI

CENTRAL
AFRICAN REP.

SOUTH
SUDAN

ETHIOPIA

¹¹ UN OCHA Sudan Humanitarian Needs Overview 2016



© Josh Estey / CARE

What needs to be done?

Six steps to aid in crises

Delivering humanitarian aid, particularly in conflict zones is a complex undertaking: funds are rarely sufficient to serve all affected people adequately; political action to resolve the fighting is often lacking due to the conflicting interests of various parties' and the insignificance of certain countries on the global political agenda; and aid workers themselves are increasingly under fire. Access to people in need requires courage and persistence: In some countries CARE International has to negotiate with dozens of armed groups to secure safe passage for staff and relief supplies. So what is needed?

“

We can't continue letting regional powers get away with conflicts and world leaders pursue global security agendas at the expense of humanity. Perpetrators of war crimes, crimes against humanity and violations of International Humanitarian Law need to be held accountable. The UN security council must be reformed to effectively stop atrocities around the world.

”

Wolfgang Jamann
Secretary General and CEO of CARE International

¹² Campaign for tobacco-free kids,
http://global.tobaccofreekids.org/files/pdfs/en/Global_Cigarette_Industry_pdf.pdf

¹³ OECD DAC Network on Gender Studies: Aid in support of gender equality and women's rights in fragile states,
<https://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/Financing%20UN%20Security%20Council%20resolution%201325%20FINAL.pdf>

¹⁴ Pew Research Center: State of the News Media 2016,
<http://www.journalism.org/2016/06/15/state-of-the-news-media-2016/> pdf

1 Conflicts must end.

This is the crux: World leaders must assume their responsibility to prevent and end conflict. Ultimately, they hold the power to find political solutions to end bloodshed and suffering. Politicians must step up their action and not neglect, or ignore, the many humanitarian crises around the world. We can't continue letting regional powers get away with conflicts and world leaders pursue global security agendas at the expense of humanity. The UN Security Council must be reformed to effectively stop atrocities around the world.

3 Respect for International Humanitarian Law.

For aid to be sufficiently distributed, attacks against aid workers and civilians must end. In many of today's conflict zones CARE's aid workers observe an increasing lack of respect for International Humanitarian Law, which should guarantee the safety of civilians, humanitarian workers and supplies during times of war. We need much stronger monitoring and accountability mechanisms to hold perpetrators to account.

4 Stronger local partnerships.

In our globalised world, CARE International is emphasising the importance of local as well as global response capacity. In a crisis, our ability to be one of the first and most efficient aid organisations is largely due to our long history of working with trusted local partners. National and local disaster response capacity must be supported and improved.

6 Media tenacity.

Aid organisations must ensure resources to deliver humanitarian aid to people even when no TV cameras are present to broadcast their plight. After years of massive budget cuts in the traditional media sector,¹⁴ reporting from the ground has become a rare opportunity for many journalists. Yet media outlets do have the power to drive discussions, raise awareness and help amplify the political, humanitarian and fundraising calls to support people in need.

2 More money is desperately needed.

The UN's Global Humanitarian Overview for 2017 requires \$22.2 billion to help over 92 million people in urgent need. While this sounds like a lot, comparing such an amount to the economic profits of major companies provides useful context. Within the global tobacco industry, for example, cigarette retail values in 2015 were worth almost 700 billion US Dollar in 2015.¹² World leaders make conscious decisions about which crisis receives funding. Major humanitarian disasters cannot be ignored, and making funding decisions based on political interests must end.

Last year, funding appeals were higher than ever as more innocent people were placed in the line of conflict or suffered from chronic crises. Violent conflicts are becoming increasingly protracted, with the average civil war lasting ten years. Typhoons, droughts and floods are becoming stronger and happen more frequently as a consequence of climate change meaning that poor people particularly must become more resilient to protect their lives, homes and livelihoods from recurring natural disasters. Despite this, funds for disaster prevention, climate change adaptation and resilience fall way below basic, adequate support as the gap between need and available funds grows wider each year.

5 Engaging women - agents of change in times of crisis.

Disasters kill more women than men, and hit women's livelihoods hardest. Around 60 per cent of all maternal deaths take place in conflicts, during displacement and natural disasters. All forms of gender-based violence against women and girls spike during disasters and conflict. Yet women and girls are not just the most affected – they are also powerful agents of change. In 2013, only one per cent of all funding in fragile states went to women's groups¹³ even though evidence shows that when women are meaningfully engaged and their needs are directly addressed, humanitarian action is more efficient and effective and the transition to recovery accelerated.

As an international aid organisation, CARE International is driven by the humanitarian imperative – providing relief based on need to the most vulnerable regardless of race, ethnicity, religious or political affiliation. We respond where we are permitted to, and we advocate at many levels to try and get the necessary access and resources where we are not. All of the featured crises here will continue to need our attention in 2017, and beyond.

The "CNN effect" might prove to be an unsolvable dilemma in a media world where news cycles turn faster and faster. Yet we are hopeful that by shining a light on the world's ignored crises we can start to raise the voices of those affected.

About CARE International

Founded in 1945, CARE International works around the globe to save lives, defeat poverty and achieve social justice. We put women and girls in the centre because we know that we cannot overcome poverty until all people have equal rights and opportunities.

Last year, CARE International worked in 94 countries around the world to assist more than 80 million people improve basic health and education, fight hunger, increase access to clean water and sanitation, expand economic opportunity, confront climate change, and recover from disasters. To learn more, visit

www.care-international.org

CARE depends on voluntary donations to deliver our poverty-fighting programmes - please support us.







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