

# HUNGER AND FAMINE CRISES

Man-made crises and severe drought have pushed countless families to the brink of starvation, but fast action now can save lives.



A constellation of troubles, many of them man-made, has brought the world—again—to a terrible point: Famine has struck a region of South Sudan and a massive hunger crisis is now threatening the lives of 20 million people across other parts of Africa and into the southern Arabian Peninsula.

Drought, climate change, conflict, and poor governance all have a hand in a looming disaster that the UN has called the largest humanitarian crisis since WWII. By the time famine is declared, people are already dying of hunger. But as catastrophic as the situation could become, immediate action now can avert the worst from happening. The UN is appealing for \$4.4 billion, needed by the end of June, to tackle the crises in South Sudan, Nigeria, Somalia, and Yemen. Other countries, like Ethiopia and Kenya, are also facing hunger emergencies. At Oxfam, we're calling on Congress to oppose any cuts to the

International Affairs budget to help meet these urgent needs.

"Without collective and coordinated global efforts, people will simply starve to death. Many more will suffer and die from disease," said Stephen O'Brien, the UN's under-secretary-general for humanitarian affairs. "Every life on the edge of famine and death is equally worth saving."

**// Famine does not arrive suddenly or unexpectedly. It comes after months of procrastination and ignored warnings. It is a slow, agonizing process, driven by callous national politics and international indifference. //**

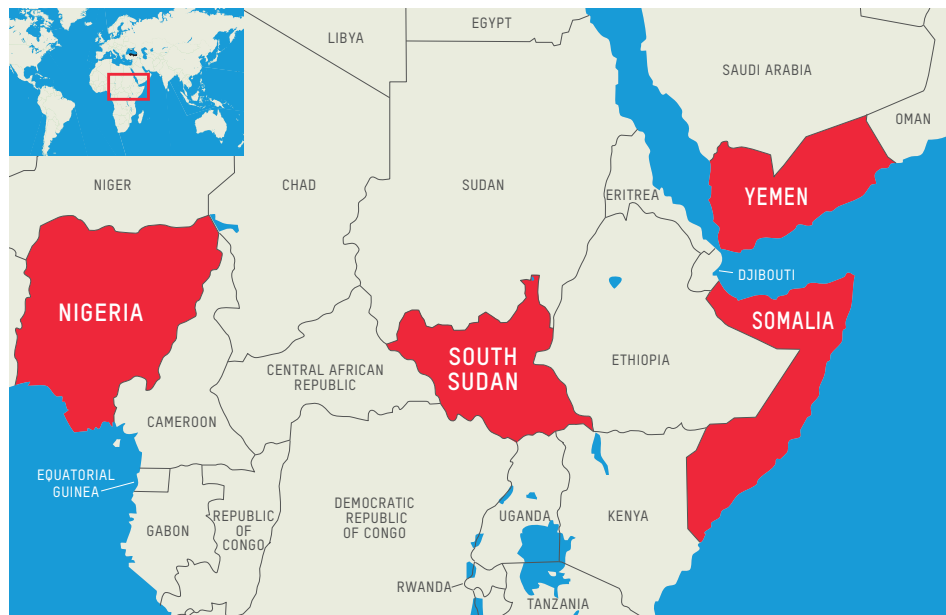
—Nigel Timmins, Oxfam humanitarian director

## AGONIZING REALITY

In their struggle to stay alive, families are confronting agonizing realities:

- **YEMEN:** Already the region's poorest country, it has sunk into crippling poverty as two years of war have forced more than 3 million people to flee their homes. Without a source of income, some families can buy neither food nor medicine for their children. Roughly seven million Yemenis are now facing starvation.
- **NIGERIA:** Years of fighting between the government and Boko Haram has forced many people from their homes, with the likelihood that at least 400,000 people may already be experiencing famine-like conditions—a number that could climb to 800,000 by the end of the year.

- **SOUTH SUDAN:** A brutal civil war triggered the famine and has forced 40 percent of the population into extreme hunger. Some people are surviving by eating the bulbs of water lilies pulled from swamps. The UN estimates more than one million South Sudanese children are acutely malnourished and 270,000 are at risk of death if help doesn't reach them soon.
- **SOMALIA:** A famine in 2011 claimed the lives of at least 260,000 people. Now, in this drought-and-conflict-riddled country, the price of a barrel of water has tripled to \$15, three-quarters of the nation's livestock are dead, and close to three million people are facing severe food shortages and are at risk of famine again.



## WHAT IS OXFAM DOING?

During severe food crises, one of the most essential things people need is clean water for drinking, cooking, and washing. Without it, waterborne diseases such as cholera can race through a community, quickly taking the lives of people already weak from hunger.

Across the affected countries, Oxfam and its local partners are striving to ensure families not only have clean water but access to decent sanitation services and programs that promote good hygiene. In addition, we are helping people get access to food by distributing it directly, by providing cash so families can buy what they need in local markets, and by helping people produce their own crops. Highlights of our response include:

- Cash distributions that are supporting more than 205,000 people in Yemen. The money enables families to purchase food locally or buy animals that can serve as a source of income.
- Regular emergency food distributions to more than 415,000 people in South Sudan and the provision of vouchers

so people hiding on islands in swampy areas can rent canoes to ferry them out for the help they need.

- The distribution of food and cooking equipment to families in Nigeria, along with kits to help people keep themselves clean and avoid diseases. Our goal is to help 500,000 people in 2017.
- Clean water, sanitation services, and cash assistance for food for a minimum of 20,000 people in Somaliland. In the next 12 months we hope to expand the response and help more than 200,000 people.

Accompanying the emergency aid, Oxfam is calling on the international community to apply political pressure on governments and those engaged in conflicts to ensure people can move safely and access the help they need. In addition, we are urging governments and international partners to work together to find political solutions to the causes of conflict and insecurity. And, so the US can do its part to save lives, we are urging Congress to oppose any cuts to the International Affairs budget.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

You can make a difference.  
Here's how:



Contact your members of Congress and ask them to oppose any cuts to the International Affairs budget, allowing the US to respond to famine and hunger emergencies.



Help Oxfam fund the work we have already begun, and expand our life-saving programs.



Bring together your family, friends, colleagues, and neighbors to host a benefit. Oxfam can support you with fundraising materials, event ideas, and other resources.

To take action, visit:  
[oxfamamerica.org/hunger-famine](http://oxfamamerica.org/hunger-famine)



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FRONT: In Nigeria, women stand at the entrance to a camp for more than 30,000 people who have fled conflict between Boko Haram and the military. The conflict has spread to Niger, Chad, and Cameroon, forcing millions of people to leave their homes and confront a new danger: hunger. *Pablo Tosco / Oxfam Intermón*