

Fact Sheet

More people face famine today than any time in modern history.

- More than 20 million people are at risk of starvation. Millions more are suffering from drought and food shortages. Our world is experiencing the worst hunger crisis in modern history, one that the United Nations is calling “the largest humanitarian crisis since 1945”.
- Famine has already been declared in areas of South Sudan, while Somalia, Nigeria and Yemen are on the brink of famine.
- Famine is caused by many potential factors including: conflict, political instability, rising food prices, drought and climate change, among others. Somalia is in its third year of drought causing crop failures, while South Sudan, Nigeria and Yemen are currently enduring major conflicts.
- ‘Famine’ and ‘food crisis’ are technical terms. A *food crisis* becomes *famine* when 30% of the community’s population is severely malnourished and at least 2 people out of every 10,000 are dying per day.
- At the start of 2017, 108 million people across the world required lifesaving food assistance, a 35% increase from the year before.

Famine affects everyone, but children under five years of age are most vulnerable to its long term impact.

- In South Sudan, Nigeria, Somalia and Yemen, millions of children are feeling the effects of food shortages. Already, almost 1.4 million children under the age of five are severely malnourished.
- If left untreated, more than one-third of severely malnourished children will die from starvation and related disease.
- Children who survive will likely endure the lifelong negative effects such as stunted growth, poor brain development and a compromised immune system.

Conflict is the common denominator across all four countries currently facing famine.

- There is a direct link between conflict and food security, in part because conflict blocks resources from where they are most needed.
- Families and children flee violence in search of safety, leaving their homes and livelihoods behind.
- Millions of children are out of school due to conflict and drought.
- Children caught up in conflict and famine face higher risk of early marriage, exploitation and domestic abuse because of the stresses on communities and families.

The global community needs to respond urgently.

- Humanitarian organisations and local faith communities are on the frontlines of the crisis, caring for the most vulnerable by providing life-saving food, aid and shelter.
- The UN and international organisations need \$4.4 billion by July 2017 to avert catastrophe in these four countries and save lives. Only 26% of the required funding has been committed globally.
- In 2011, conflict created extreme food shortages in Somalia and more than 260,000 people lost their lives - half died before *famine* was declared and the full scale of tragedy was not known for years. We cannot wait until famines are officially declared - action must be taken now in South Sudan, Somalia, Nigeria and Yemen.

Join churches worldwide to pray for justice and peace.

The Global Day of Prayer to End Famine is a broad coalition of church networks, denominations, faith-based organisations and concerned believers led by World Council of Churches, which represents more than 500 million Christians worldwide, and All African Conference of Churches, which represents more than 120 million Christians in Africa. **Learn more at - add WCC web link & <http://praytoendfamine.org>**