

Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Growing global instability & humanitarian need - Caritas appeals for help

2 July 2025 – WELLINGTON - Worsening global instability, escalating humanitarian crises, and shrinking foreign aid budgets are creating a perfect storm for communities around the world that face conflict, disaster and displacement, says Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand.

From the deadly earthquake in Myanmar to the ongoing plight of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, the suffering in Gaza and Ukraine, and renewed violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Somalia, global humanitarian crises are increasing at an alarming rate it says.

Appeal launched

Caritas, the second largest humanitarian network in the world, is urgently appealing to New Zealanders this month to show solidarity with those facing these emergencies.

The network is responding in some of the world's hardest-hit places. In Gaza, where up to 61,000 people have been killed since October 2023, local Caritas teams are providing life-saving aid under extreme conditions. In Myanmar, New Zealand generosity continues to help those who have lost everything following this year's earthquake. In Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, Caritas is helping thousands of Rohingya persecuted and chased from their homes.

"Crises are intensifying, not diminishing," says Mena Antonio, Chief Executive of Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand. "And yet, international support is shrinking. Humanitarian assistance budgets are being cut at the very moment global need is reaching record levels. That is why we are asking for the help of New Zealanders right now. It has never been so urgent."

Aid budgets under threat

This year, the US closed USAID - its foreign aid agency, while the UK slashed overseas aid spending by 40 percent to prioritise military expenditure. This pattern was repeated amongst most major donor countries. The New Zealand Government's 2025 Budget included a 50 percent cut in climate finance for vulnerable Pacific countries, and overall international aid commitments are now under review.

"These reductions come at great human cost," said Antonio. "Across

our global Caritas network, we are witnessing daily how conflict, displacement, and disasters are pushing millions into hunger, poverty and trauma. Yet Caritas aid workers continue to show up to work, because they know the stakes are life and death.”

Through partnerships in places like Gaza, Papua New Guinea, Pakistan and Bangladesh, Caritas is delivering emergency relief, medical care, shelter, mental health support and rehabilitation services. This is often in areas where access is restricted, or infrastructure has collapsed.

“Peace is not just the absence of war – it’s the presence of justice, dignity and support,” said Antonio. “When New Zealanders give to Caritas, they are investing in peace.”

In 2024, Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand supported more than 472,000 people across the world with life-saving relief. With support from New Zealanders, that work will continue even as the need escalates.

To contribute to the Caritas appeal or to learn more about the impact of Caritas’ humanitarian response, visit: caritas.org.nz/winter

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Notes to editors

Interviews available on request

Caritas is the world's second largest humanitarian network, with more than 160 members across 200 countries and territories. We are working for a world free of poverty and injustice through community development, advocacy, education, and emergency relief. Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand is a vital member of the global Caritas Internationalis network and a key member of the Caritas Oceania regional network. www.caritas.org.nz

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