



Providing Urgent Relief to Families Impacted by Conflict



Photo by Stefanie Glinski for CRS

THE SITUATION ACROSS THE MIDDLE EAST

Across the Middle East, rising violence is deepening fears of a wider regional crisis. Communities across the region—many already coping with years of conflict, displacement and economic hardship—now face renewed uncertainty as tensions escalate and families brace for further instability.

ESCALATION IN LEBANON

Lebanon is already feeling the impact. In the early hours of March 2, exchanges of fire erupted along the Lebanon-Israel border, followed by extensive airstrikes in South Lebanon, the Bekaa Valley and the southern suburbs of Beirut. Within hours, 53 villages were ordered to evacuate, forcing tens of thousands of families to flee their homes. By March 5, as the violence intensified, all residents south of the Litani River and in the Beirut southern suburbs—home to roughly 750,000 people—were told to evacuate.

Families are seeking safety wherever they can. Schools, community centers and public buildings have been transformed into makeshift shelters, many of which are already full. Roads are crowded as people flee with only what they can carry, and communities are struggling to absorb the growing number of displaced families.

As the crisis unfolds, projections indicate the number of internally displaced people could soon exceed 1 million, while urgent needs for safe shelter, food, clean water and medical care continue to rise.

Catholic Relief Services and our partners remain on the ground, responding. Working with Caritas Lebanon and other local partners, CRS is providing emergency supplies to families in shelters—including hot meals, water, blankets, mattresses and other essential items—while assessing how best to support communities in the days and weeks ahead.

HOW TO HELP

- **Donate online:** crs.org/donate/middle-east-crisis
- **Donate by phone:** 1-877-HELP-CRS
- **Donate by check:**
Catholic Relief Services—Middle East Crisis
P.O. Box 5278, Tipton, IA 52772-0517



“ People in Lebanon are afraid—of the destruction, of what the future holds and increasingly of each other. Airstrikes are hitting communities across the country, and displaced families are often seen as potential targets, making even offering shelter feel dangerous. As the social arm of the Catholic Church, we are called to overcome fear with faith and show solidarity with those who have nowhere else to turn. Despite the suffering, I feel blessed to be able to support people in this moment.”

— CEDRIC CHOUKEIR, CRS COUNTRY REPRESENTATIVE IN LEBANON

CRS AND PARTNER RESPONSE

If violence continues to escalate, the humanitarian consequences could spread across the region, creating further displacement, including cross-border movement into neighboring countries where conditions are already fragile. CRS and Caritas teams across the Middle East are closely monitoring developments and stand ready to increase program activities and launch emergency response efforts as needed. Additional support will be critical to ensure lifesaving assistance reaches families seeking safety and dignity amid this evolving crisis.

CRS and our partners are already helping families affected by escalating violence in Lebanon and are prepared to expand support across the Middle East. Initial efforts focus on lifesaving assistance—including shelter, food, water, sanitation and hygiene support, and other essential supplies for displaced families.

As conditions allow, programs will transition toward early recovery activities that help communities restore homes, rebuild livelihoods and regain stability. Support for emotional wellbeing will remain central throughout the response, particularly for families coping with distress, loss and trauma.

Response activities may evolve as the situation develops, but programming priorities are expected to include:

Shelter

- Emergency shelter, including collective centers, and support for safe refuge.
- Repair and reconstruction of damaged homes and infrastructure.

Food and Essential Supplies

- Cash assistance and/or direct distribution of food and essential household items.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

- Hygiene kits to prevent waterborne illness.
- Access to safe drinking water and sanitation services.
- Restoration of damaged water systems.

Protection, Psychological and Social Support

- Psychological first aid and social support.
- Child protection and prevention of family separation.
- Outreach and support for women, including protection from gender-based violence.
- Protection integrated across all programming.

Livelihoods Recovery

- Support for livelihood restoration.
- Training and investment to restart livelihood activities.
- New income-generating opportunities where needed.
- Prioritizing local markets and resources in recovery efforts.

THE CHURCH AT THE FRONTLINES OF CRISIS AND RECOVERY

For decades, CRS has worked across the Middle East to support families affected by conflict, displacement and economic hardship. In a region where crises have disrupted communities for years, CRS works through longstanding partnerships with local organizations—including Church partners deeply rooted in the communities they serve—to respond to urgent needs and support long-term recovery.

Across the region and surrounding countries—including Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan and the Holy Land—CRS and our partners provide lifesaving assistance, such as food, shelter, clean water, medical care and education, while helping families rebuild livelihoods and strengthen resilience. CRS works closely with communities to ensure assistance reaches those most in need, particularly vulnerable and marginalized groups.