



Congressional Newsletter

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IRUSA's 2024 Global Humanitarian Impact Overview and 2025 Crisis Forecast



In 2024, Islamic Relief USA (IRUSA) provided lifesaving emergency and development assistance to millions of vulnerable people around the world and across the United States. In addition to our global response, IRUSA implemented food security and healthcare projects across 29 states and the District of Columbia, serving around 320K people.

The following is a snapshot of our sectoral and country-based efforts exemplifying our ongoing commitment to help those in need around the world in a dignified and impartial manner, regardless of gender, race, or religion.

Fighting Food Insecurity



Hunger around the world continues to rise, with over 864 million people experiencing **severe** food insecurity, going without food for an entire day or more at times. That is why food aid is the largest sector of IRUSA's humanitarian aid.

Estimated number of people supported: 4.4 million

Food projects: 113 (101 projects internationally, including Ramadan and Qurbani)

Countries: 21

Food Security Forecast

Projections for 2025 estimate that 343 million people across 74 countries will face **acute** food insecurity, according to the World Food Program. The primary food insecurity hotspots for 2025 include Sudan, South Sudan, Haiti, Mali, Chad, Lebanon, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nigeria, Syria, and Yemen. Conflict, extreme heat, flooding, and droughts are also likely to worsen food insecurity in around 60 fragile and conflict affected states (OECD.)

Building Sustainable Livelihoods/Reducing Poverty

The number of people living in extreme poverty around the world continues to rise, with an estimated 9.2% of the world's population surviving on less than \$2.15 a day. IRUSA donors help people acquire the skills they need to develop a reliable means of earning income through sustainable livelihood projects.

Estimated number of people supported: 2.8 million

Livelihoods projects: 64 internationally

Countries: 20

Supporting Education and Literacy

One in five adults around the world have not received any formal education, and in the Middle East, North Africa, and sub-Saharan Africa, nearly 41% of the adults have not completed even one year of school. The number of uneducated women is nearly double that of men.

IRUSA assists children in going back to school through various programs such as the "Assisting out of School Girls Access to Education" in Afghanistan with several projects and educational scholarships. We also assist adults in gaining the knowledge they need for employment through vocational training programs in fields such as bookkeeping, tailoring, small business development, and more.



Estimated number of people supported: around 400K
Education projects: 15 internationally
Countries: 6 (Kenya, Afghanistan, Iraq, Lebanon, Guatemala and Mexico)

Providing Access to Healthcare Services



According to the World Health Organization (WHO), some 4.5 billion people — more than half of the world's population — are currently without adequate access to essential healthcare services in 2024. IRUSA is dedicated to improving access to healthcare for those around the world and here at home. In 2024 we implemented 65 health projects in the United States and around the world.

Estimated number of people supported: 3.9 million
Health projects: 46 internationally
Countries: 10

Providing Access to Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene

Access to clean water is not just a matter of convenience; it is a fundamental human right. As of 2024, 2.2 billion people globally do not have access to clean, safe drinking water. Instead of turning on their faucets or flushing their toilets like we do, they source their water from scarce and contaminated water sources, leading to 3.4 million deaths each year. At IRUSA, our water projects around the world focus on improving access to clean water resources and reducing the impact of water-borne diseases through water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH.)



Estimated number of people supported: 2.5 million
WASH projects: 52 internationally
Countries: 17

Women and Children



One in every 10 women is living in extreme poverty, and if the trend continues, 342.4 million women and girls will still be living on less than \$2.15 a day by 2030. Women are also less likely to have access to financial institutions and bank accounts, which exacerbates their situations. IRUSA is dedicated to serving women across the various sectors we work in including food aid, socio-economic empowerment, and sustainable livelihood opportunities.

Emergency Assistance

Estimated number of people supported: 3.5 million
Emergency projects: 58 internationally
Countries: 23

Below are highlights from three of our priority humanitarian relief efforts in 2024:

Sudan



IRUSA has been actively engaged in Sudan for over 30 years, addressing both emergency and long-term development needs, investing over \$19 million in just the past five years. Our work focuses on providing lifesaving humanitarian assistance and promoting sustainable development, guided by the principles of empowerment and coordination with local partners. IRUSA has been at the forefront of responding to ongoing crises in Sudan, including conflicts, displacement, and natural disasters.

On April 15, 2023, clashes erupted between armed groups in multiple cities across Sudan. IRUSA launched an emergency response to support those affected by violence across the country. Our interventions aimed at reducing the potential for starvation and hunger by providing multipurpose cash assistance, improving personal hygiene practices, reducing hygiene-related diseases by awareness raising, the distribution of non-food items (NFI's,) and temporary shelters. We also supported healthcare services in two hospitals in Gedaref and North Kordofan by providing lifesaving essential emergency medicines, fuel to run the hospitals' electric generators, food for patients, and cash assistance for referral patients.

IRUSA designs its global programs with a specific focus on the most vulnerable groups, including children, women, elderly, and the disabled. In Sudan, we assisted 5,700 women, girls, and children affected by conflict, providing psychosocial support, dignity kits, and recreational items for mitigating their protection concerns and improving their well-being.

Forecast in 2025

From a humanitarian perspective, Sudan is the most vulnerable country in 2025. The largest security risk stems from the continuing civil war between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces, which has displaced over 11 million people internally and 3 million people have fled to neighboring countries since conflict began in 2023. Sudanese civil society and local humanitarian actors will find it increasingly dangerous to operate in Sudan, which are vital elements needed to alleviate these crises. Sudan also faces an increased risk from floods and droughts, which will further affect food production across the country, worsening the world's worst hunger crisis, and further destabilizing the country.

Lebanon



Over the past several years, IRUSA has been at the forefront of humanitarian aid efforts in Lebanon, focusing on emergency relief, food security, and basic support services, as well as long-term development initiatives. In 2024, IRUSA launched an emergency response and provided immediate assistance to displaced civilians, including food aid, essential non-food items, and access to healthcare for families in desperate need. Notably, the Lebanon Emergency Response projects have made a significant impact in the region, reaching over 13,000 individuals. Additionally, our seasonal food distribution activities supported over 60,000 people in 2024. These efforts are designed to provide vital support to communities grappling with the compounding effects of conflict, economic instability, and harsh weather conditions.

Beyond immediate relief, IRUSA is also focused on longer-term initiatives aimed at building sustainable livelihoods and economic growth. The Technical Training Scholarships for Youth program is one such example. This initiative empowers Lebanon's youth by providing them with the skills and opportunities to create sustainable, long-term careers. By addressing both immediate humanitarian needs and laying the groundwork for future growth and empowerment, IRUSA continues to play a critical role in Lebanon's long-term recovery and resilience.

Forecast in 2025

The primary humanitarian concerns facing Lebanon in 2025 will center on internal displacement, refugees, and weakened healthcare infrastructure following the 2024 Israel/Hezbollah war. The possibility of destabilization in Syria and the potential collapse of a tenuous cease-fire between Israel and Hezbollah represent possible threats that could significantly worsen humanitarian conditions in Lebanon. An estimated 1.5 million Syrian refugees resided in Lebanon through 2024. Despite the collapse of the Assad regime, the pressure of sanctions that remain on the Syrian economy, as well as the strong possibility of a deteriorating security situation will decrease the likelihood of swift and mass returns to Syria from Lebanon in 2025. Significant damage to housing and critical infrastructure will further hinder full reintegration in 2025.

Morocco



In September 2023, a 6.8 magnitude earthquake struck Morocco, leaving thousands of people dead and even more injured. The earthquake remains the strongest natural disaster to hit the nation's center in more than a century, affecting over 300,000 people.

In response, IRUSA worked with local partners to provide immediate emergency aid, including access to healthcare, essential non-food items, cash assistance, and shelter. To help mitigate harsh winter conditions and build resilience for earthquake-affected families through winter aid, IRUSA supported 2,125 people with cash assistance and rehabilitated 95 homes. We also provided multipurpose cash assistance to 3,000 people to help address their basic needs and reduce their vulnerability. We constructed modular homes, complete with sewage and clean water systems, for 91 families to inhabit in March and September of 2024.

Additionally, we served 4,200 people with essential food items during the holy month of Ramadan. As part of our Eid al-Adha Assistance Program, 346 vulnerable families received one sheep per family. As part of our long-term development aid, IRUSA continues implementing economic recovery and participation for rural women in Central Morocco.

IRUSA is also monitoring the potentially deteriorating humanitarian conditions in the following countries in 2025:

Syria



The primary humanitarian concerns facing Syria in 2025 will likely center on the potential for internal conflict and destabilization, internal displacement, refugee return, unexploded ordnance disposal, access to general goods, and extensive problems stemming from the severe degradation of nearly all critical infrastructure (including water supply and medical facilities) across the country. The domestic security situation in Syria could further destabilize in due to the uncertain commitment of US forces maintaining a military presence in the country and continue aiding Kurdish partner forces currently responsible for the detention of tens of thousands of ISIS fighters. The evacuation of US forces and a fragile new government could lead to the potential resurgence of ISIS. Conflict in northern Syria between Türkiye and Turkish-backed militants against Kurdish forces has caused the internal displacement over 25,000 people since the fall of the Assad regime could persist in 2025. The potential return of large numbers of Syrian refugees from abroad could further burden the severely damaged infrastructure and an economy that remains under heavy sanctions.

Afghanistan



Nearly half the population of Afghanistan, 9 million people, will face life-threatening humanitarian conditions in 2025, according to the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). The most urgent threats stem from food insecurity, lack of safe drinking water, inadequate supplies for sanitation (such as clean water), inadequate access to medical treatment, and unexploded ordinance. The continued deterioration of domestic security conditions, as well as chronic geopolitical and domestic political restrictions, will hinder access to critical aid for millions of Afghans throughout 2025. Afghanistan is expected to face increased droughts, worsening food insecurity as a result of persistent of below-average precipitation.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

The DRC is vulnerable to several risks across the security, geopolitical, and environmental spheres. The key security risk stems from the ongoing conflict between the Rwanda-backed R23 rebel group and Congolese forces in Goma and surrounding regions, along with 18 other violent non-state groups that together make up a complex and volatile security environment in Eastern DRC. Already in 2025, this conflict has led to 900 deaths and nearly 500,000 displaced persons, with further destabilization possible over the course of the year. This is in addition to the 7 million people internally displaced from previous conflicts in the DRC. The country also faces heightened environmental degradation risks in 2025, including deforestation and water pollution from agricultural and mining waste.

Columbia



Colombia is at humanitarian risk in 2025 due to several factors, including fighting between the ELN and FARC rebel groups, which has already led to over 80 deaths and displaced tens of thousands in January. This conflict, combined with a heavy Colombian military presence in the region, will complicate humanitarian access and increase risks for civilians and aid workers. Additionally, diplomatic tensions, particularly with the United States over migrants, drug production, and counternarcotics cooperation with Venezuela, will impact border security and humanitarian operations. These factors are likely to limit access in certain regions and affect the movement of goods and people. Finally, Colombia will be vulnerable to environmental risks and extreme weather events in 2025, including earthquakes, wildfires, and limited rainfall.

For further information on IRUSA's domestic and global humanitarian responses and development programs, contact Jared Markland at jmarkland@irusa.org or visit irusa.org



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