



Breaking the Silence

The 10 most under-reported
humanitarian crises of 2022





Climate change and the effects of the war in Ukraine had a severe impact on millions of people in 2022. Disrupted supply chains led to a rise in food prices and a global crisis. The number of people going hungry worldwide increased from 811 to 828 million.

Introduction



The ongoing conflict in Ukraine has killed thousands¹ and left millions displaced.² As infrastructure is destroyed, people have limited or no access to shelter, electricity or gas; surviving this winter is made even harder. Since February 2022, more than two million articles have been written online and appeared in the media about the war.

However, this time last year, Ukraine ranked second among the forgotten humanitarian crises highlighted in CARE International's report, "The Most Under-Reported Crises", which shines a spotlight on the **ten crises that have received the lowest media attention**.

These are tough times. 2022 has seen a large number of global humanitarian emergencies: conflict, unprecedented levels of forced displacement – internally and across borders – exacerbated by economic crises, high inflation rates and rising energy costs. The devastating effects of climate change are also being felt across the world: intense heatwaves, fires, drought and floods. Disrupted supply chains and missing grain and fertilizer deliveries mean even more hunger and poverty for millions of people. As with the climate crisis, this is having the hardest impact on those regions and people who are already among the most vulnerable and at risk.

Our 2022 report shows that **all** of the most under-reported crises are now in **Africa**. Hunger is rampant and spreading, particularly in East Africa where one of the worst droughts in living memory is causing over 21 million people to face life-threatening hunger.³ Water becomes scarcer every day, crops are failing, livestock are dying. Women and girls are disproportionately affected, with 150 million more women than men going hungry in 2021 around the world.⁴

Yet media attention on countries such as Malawi, Zambia and Chad fall into the shadows of the news headlines. This year, there have been more than fifty times the number of media articles written about the new iPhone 14 (95,118) than the millions of people in need of life-saving humanitarian aid right now due to extreme drought in Angola (1,847) – the crisis which received the least media attention in 2022.

This report shows us, once again, that there are no easy solutions. Humanitarian aid is often all that is left to make a difference for millions who don't make the headlines. In this report, you will see how CARE is working with partners and crisis-affected communities to bring about lasting change, providing life-saving assistance as well as investing in resilience-building approaches.

We all must play our part to bring such stories to the world's attention. Reporting on the global hunger and climate crisis and their impacts on entire communities, including women, girls and children who often suffer grave protection risks, must be a top priority so that more humanitarian aid can reach these regions in the critical hours, days and weeks ahead.

Eamon Cassidy
Interim CEO,
CARE International UK

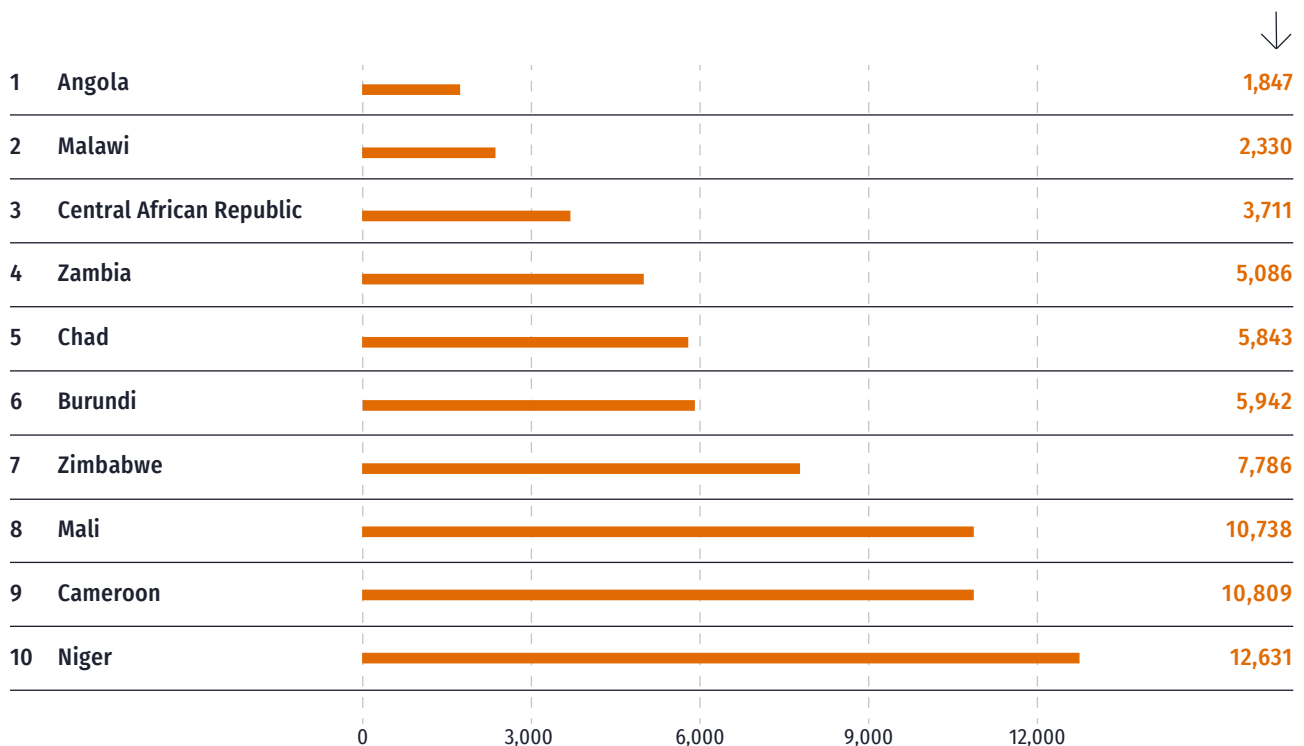
Methodology

In collaboration with the media monitoring service Meltwater, CARE analysed the humanitarian crises that received the least media attention in 2022. More than 5.8 million online articles were analysed between 1st January and 10th October 2022. To do this, we identified the countries where at least one million people were affected by conflict or climate-related disasters. The total number of people affected by each crisis is derived from data from ACAPS, Reliefweb and CARE. The result – a list of 47 crises – was subjected to media analysis and ranked by the number of online articles published on the topic. This report, which is published annually by CARE, summarises the ten crises that received the least attention.

The media analysis is based on online articles in Arabic, English, French, German and Spanish. While the report can only show a trend in coverage, it provides valuable insight into the amount of global attention paid to humanitarian crises in online media. It aims to help aid organisations, the media, policymakers and affected communities discuss how to better raise awareness and increase support for people in need around the world.

Ten humanitarian crises that didn't make the headlines in 2022

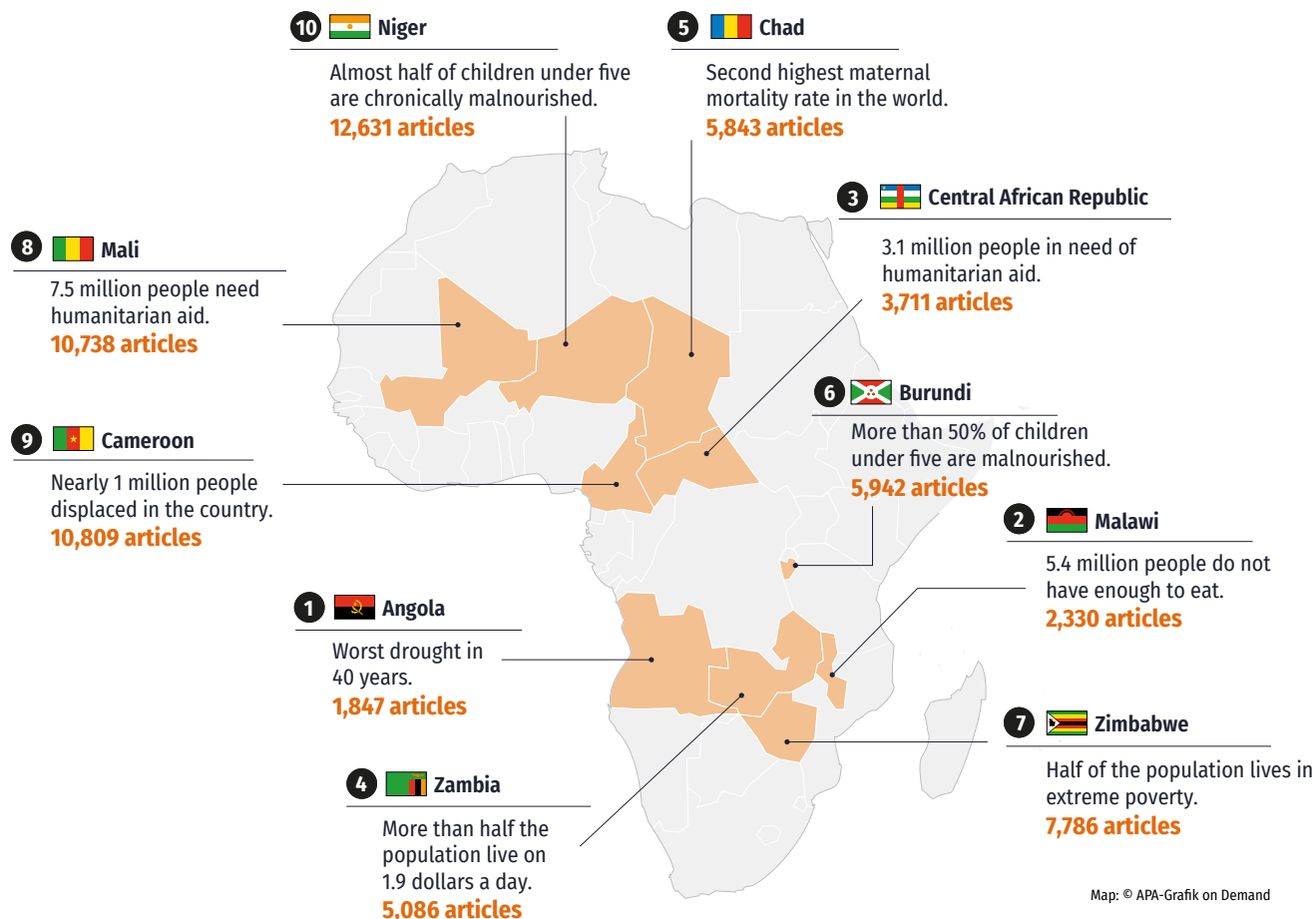
Number of online articles between 1st January and 10th October 2022



The world's blind spots

 **Online articles**
(1.1.2022 – 10.10.2022)

 **Position in ranking**
(Online articles)



In comparison ...

95,118

Online articles about the new iPhone14

114,254

Online articles about the reunion of Ben Affleck and Jennifer Lopez

217,529

Online articles about Will Smith slapping Chris Rock at the Oscars

248,132

Online articles about Elon Musk's purchase offer to Twitter

285,580

Online articles about the Winter Olympics in China

1

Angola: Drought, hunger and displacement



Angola, located in southwestern Africa, is rich in natural resources. But the climate crisis is hitting the country with full force: southern Angola is experiencing its worst drought in 40 years.⁸ The population is suffering from hunger and displacement. As global temperatures continue to rise, dry spells are anticipated to become even more frequent and destructive in the future.

The south of the country is repeatedly hit by droughts. The lack of rainfall causes harvests to deteriorate, and livestock in the region are dying.⁹ Far from the cities, the population is dependent on agriculture. As a result of the drought, many people are now struggling with food insecurity and malnutrition.¹⁰

Families in need

Some 114,000 children under the age of five are acutely malnourished. Contaminated drinking water and low rates of vaccination against infectious diseases worsen the situation for children.¹¹

Many families see no way out. They leave their homes and look for new opportunities, with some fleeing to neighboring Namibia. There are around 16,000 internally displaced people within Angola, and 2,000 people in emergency shelters.¹² Angola is also currently hosting nearly 60,000 refugees from countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo.¹³

Women and girls at risk

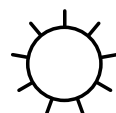
Women and girls are particularly affected by the drought in southern Angola. The climate crisis is exacerbating already existing inequalities. Women are not involved in decisions about the distribution of resources in their communities. When climate conditions threaten their livelihoods, their only option is often to flee;¹⁴ women and girls make up the majority of climate refugees.

No money for food

Angola is among the four countries with the highest price increases for food such as cereals and cooking oil, aggravated by the war in Ukraine.¹⁵ Many people can no longer afford basic foodstuffs. An estimated 3.8 million people currently lack sufficient food in the south of the country.¹⁶

CARE in Angola

CARE does not currently deliver any programmes in Angola. However, we hope that this report will draw attention to the crisis in the country and encourage actors to respond. CARE does provide targeted support to women and girls in several other countries in southern Africa.



Worst drought in 40 years⁵

3.81 million people do not have enough to eat⁶

114,000 children under 5 are malnourished⁷



—○ Malawi

Members of a village savings and loan association (VSLA) group meet in Mphomwe, Malawi. CARE has facilitated VSLA groups for more than 8.4 million people across 51 countries.



—○ Malawi

Gender equality is an important focus of CARE's work in Malawi. CARE empowers women in a range of ways, including teaching climate-resilient farming methods.

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Malawi: Cyclones, cholera and hunger



Natural disasters and cholera: Malawi has been hit by many crises. Although it is one of the countries that is contributing least to the climate crisis, Malawi is among the hardest hit by its effects.

Extreme weather events such as drought and cyclones occur very frequently. As a result, food is scarce, with 5.4 million people not having enough to eat.¹⁹ Much of the population depends on agriculture. Long periods of drought and flooding pose an existential threat, exacerbating an already profound food crisis.

In 2019, Cyclone Idai left a trail of devastation in its wake. Floods destroyed crops and the homes of nearly 87,000 people. In early 2022, Cyclone Ana swept across Malawi, leaving nearly one million people in need of life-saving humanitarian aid.²⁰ Floods displaced more than 150,000 people, who have had to seek shelter in schools or other emergency shelters because they have lost their homes.²¹ In many areas, the reconstruction efforts following Cyclone Idai were in vain, as homes and communities were once again devastated.

An overburdened health system

Malawi is currently experiencing one of the worst cholera outbreaks in years. The lack of clean drinking water and inadequate sanitation are causing the infectious disease to spread throughout the country.²²

As of November 2022, the country had recorded a total of 8,627 cases of cholera. The mortality rate is high at three percent, well above the WHO threshold of one percent. The high number of deaths shows how serious the situation is. The occurrence of cholera in the dry season is a worrying development. Previously, the disease was most prevalent in the rainy season. This makes it more important for Malawi to do everything possible to contain its spread.

COVID-19 remains a risk nationwide. Diseases such as polio, malaria and tuberculosis are also bringing the health system to the brink of collapse.²³

Malawi has a population of about 21 million.²⁴ It is one of the most densely populated countries in Africa and has a young population. The number of HIV infections is very high. According to estimates, almost 10 percent of the population is infected, including many children.²⁵

CARE in Malawi

In Malawi, CARE works on disaster preparedness and delivers critical emergency assistance, supporting the most vulnerable people with aid packages. CARE works with the government to improve food security in the country, and helps with medicines and information about HIV. CARE also provides training on balanced nutrition to strengthen the health of pregnant women and mothers. Through **village savings and loan associations (VSLAs)**, women are also helped to become more financially independent.

Village savings and loan associations (VSLAs)

CARE's '**village savings and loan association**' (VSLA) programme began in Niger more than 30 years ago, and has since grown to become a globally successful model. Groups of women save together through regular meetings and take loans from accumulated group savings. This strengthens them economically, creates a much-needed social safety net and boosts their standing in the community. It also enables them to strengthen their livelihoods and provide for their families. Worldwide, CARE has facilitated VSLA groups for more than 8.4 million people across 51 countries over the last two decades.

5.4 million people do not have enough to eat¹⁷

37% Over 37% of children are malnourished¹⁸

10% Ten percent of the population is infected with HIV



3

Central African Republic: Conflict, violence and climate crisis

Arable crops, fruit and vegetables grow almost all year round in the Central African Republic. But still, people are going hungry. One in two people do not have enough to eat.

For years, the climate crisis has been destroying what thrives on the fertile soils. In June 2022, huge floods destroyed more than 2,600 houses and 18,500 hectares of cultivated land. About 85,300 people lost their homes. Many sought shelter in public buildings. But when schools become emergency shelters, there is no place to learn. Around 10,000 children were unable to start the new school year.²⁸ When this happens, many fall out of the education system altogether and have no chance of returning.

A life expectancy of 53

Needs are growing throughout the country. About 63 percent of the population – 3.1 million people – need humanitarian aid.²⁹ Although the Central African Republic is rich in raw materials, it is one of the poorest countries in the world, ranking 188 out of 191 countries in the UNDP Human Development Index.³⁰ **Average life expectancy is 53.3 years, one of the lowest in the world.**³¹ About 71 percent of the population live below the poverty line.³²

An armed conflict has been taking place in the Central African Republic since 2013. Hundreds of people have already lost their lives.³³ The number of refugees fleeing the

country has risen to over 740,000, with more than 350,000 seeking shelter in Cameroon. Within the Central African Republic, there are over 500,000 internally displaced persons.³⁴

Violence against women

The crisis is impacting on women and girls particularly hard. Children often go to school for only four years instead of eight.³⁵ Early and forced marriages are widespread.

The Central African Republic has the second highest prevalence of child marriage globally after Niger. 68% of girls are married before the age of 18, and 29% are married before the age of 15.³⁶

Violence against women is also on the rise. From January to June 2022, more than 11,700 cases were registered – already exceeding the total number recorded in 2021.³⁷ Sexual violence is increasingly being targeted at younger women and girls.³⁸ Survivors of sexual violence not only face health consequences, but also stigma which can push them into poverty.³⁹

CARE in the Central African Republic

CARE does not currently have a direct presence in the Central African Republic, but provides humanitarian assistance in neighboring countries, where many of the refugees arrive. In 2021, CARE reached 1.2 million people in the Lake Chad region with relief supplies. Working with local partners, CARE provides people with food, cash, shelter, clean water, hygiene items and offers medical support.

3.1 million people in need of
humanitarian aid²⁶



**Gender-based violence
continues to rise²⁷**



4

Zambia: Poverty, HIV and violence

A year ago, Zambia ranked No.1 on CARE's list of most under-reported crises. This year it is at No. 4. However, that is more of a reflection of the worsening crises in other countries on the list, rather than any improvements to the situation in Zambia.

Half of the population gets by on less than 1.9 US dollars a day.⁴² More than ten percent are infected with HIV.⁴³ Women are affected much more frequently than men. In 2021, around 19,000 people died of AIDS in the country.⁴⁴

A young population

Zambia is a large, resource-rich landlocked country in southern Africa that is sparsely populated, with just under 19 million inhabitants. The population is among the youngest in the world. On average, people in Zambia are 16.9 years old.⁴⁵

60 percent of the population lives below the poverty line.⁴⁶ Economic growth has done nothing to change this. In the World Hunger Index, Zambia ranks 108 out of 121. Malnutrition is widespread – about 6.1 percent of children under five die of malnutrition.⁴⁷

As in many sub-Saharan countries, the climate crisis is evident in Zambia. Dry periods last for long intervals, and temperatures are extremely high. Insect swarms and floods destroy crops. Some 1.5 million people – including an estimated 821,000 children – are directly affected. About 13 percent of the population experiences food shortages.⁴⁸

COVID-19 has exacerbated hardship

Eight in ten households report that COVID-19 has negatively impacted their business or workplace. One in three households experienced income loss or job loss.⁴⁹ Because parents lack money for school fees, teaching materials and uniforms, many girls have to drop out of school early. The COVID-19 crisis has further exacerbated this.

Violence against girls and women is widespread. Government measures to date have not been sufficient.⁵⁰ Gender inequality is also evident across other areas. Of those in paid work, more women live below the poverty line than men.⁵¹

CARE in Zambia

CARE has been working in Zambia since 1992, with a specific focus on women and girls, including improving nutrition for mothers and children. CARE relies on cooperation with the government to mitigate the consequences of the climate crisis in areas such as agriculture, livestock and water supply. CARE also assists people in need after floods or drought with different kinds of support, including hygiene kits. CARE also advocates for the full participation of people living with HIV or AIDS.

CARE's emergency response in Zambia is based on collaboration with local partner organisations. This has proven effective during emergencies such as the 2021/22 floods, as local partners were able to respond quickly and identify who was most in need of help. For CARE, community-based organisations are an important source of information for getting assistance to people in need as quickly and efficiently as possible. Women often lead the way in this regard. In the Mwaata Ward area, for example, the relief effort after the floods was coordinated by the chairwoman of the Ward Development Committee.

\$1.9 More than half the population live on 1.9 dollars a day⁴⁰

16.9 Young population, with an average age of 16.9 years⁴¹



Girls leave school early



—○ Zambia

A community health entrepreneur, trained and supported by CARE, selling health impact products and promoting healthcare to communities in Zambia.



—○ Chad

Chad hosts the largest refugee population in the Sahel region, with 575,000 refugees. Amina is one of them. “I lived with my family on an island in the lake until our village was attacked,” she says. “They burned down our house. I woke up my children and we ran away together.”

Unrest and floods



Chad is one of the poorest countries in the world. 6.1 million people need humanitarian aid.⁵⁴ Violence and insecurity dominate the lives of the population. The country has suffered from armed conflicts in the Sahel region for years. The region around Lake Chad is particularly affected by the activities of various armed groups.

In mid-October 2022, thousands of people in Chad took to the streets in several cities across the country, demonstrating against the interim military government and calling for democratic elections. Dozens were killed and hundreds injured.

The ongoing unrest in Chad and neighbouring countries is causing displacement within the country and beyond its borders. The landlocked central African country hosts the largest refugee population in the Sahel region,⁵⁵ with 575,000 refugees. More than two-thirds are from Sudan. In addition, there are 381,000 people fleeing within the country.⁵⁶ The humanitarian needs are enormous and are draining the country's scarce resources.

One in every ten children dies before the age of five

Chad is facing a food crisis. Four million people are dependent on food aid, including 1.7 million children affected by acute malnutrition.⁵⁷ This is accompanied by a high infant mortality rate. One in every ten children dies before the age of five.⁵⁸

A range of factors are contributing to the hunger crisis. As a result of the war in Ukraine, prices have risen and there is a lack of necessary food imports. In addition, irregular rainfall during the rainy season has led to lower agricultural yields. Devastating floods destroyed more than 465,000 hectares of agricultural land. Nearly 20,000 livestock perished in the floods. Over one million people have been affected and are dependent on emergency humanitarian aid.

Two-thirds of girls under 18 are married

According to the Gender Inequality Index, Chad ranks 165th out of 191 for gender equality.⁵⁹ The country has the second highest maternal mortality rate in the world.⁶⁰ For every 100,000 live births, 1,140 women die in or shortly after childbirth.⁶¹ Child marriages are widespread. Over two-thirds of girls marry under the age of 18, and more than a quarter are younger than 15 when they marry.⁶²

CARE in Chad

CARE has been working in Chad since 1975, providing access to clean water and sanitation, among other interventions. CARE also provides emergency humanitarian aid and offers psychological counselling for refugees.

CARE supports people in Chad to build their resilience to the effects of climate change, and provides livelihoods support through handicraft training and village savings and loan groups (VSLAs). CARE also equips health clinics in Tandjilé and Wadi Fira with medicines, vaccinations, equipment and training. This is aimed at improving the health and nutrition of children under five and the care of pregnant and lactating women.

CARE works with several local organisations in Chad. These include CELIAF, an umbrella organisation of more than 200 women's associations. CELIAF strengthens savings groups and fights discrimination against women. In addition, women and girls receive support to cope with flooding and food insecurity. CARE and its partners also addressed 320 cases of gender-based violence in 2022.

1.7 million children are acutely malnourished⁵²



Second highest maternal mortality rate in the world⁵³

Burundi:

Between natural disaster and economic crisis



Burundi is considered the ‘heart of Africa’, due to the unique shape of this small, landlocked East African country. Another distinct feature lies in the south-west: Lake Tanganyika. It is the oldest and deepest lake in Africa, known for its extraordinary biodiversity. 95 percent of the more than 300 fish species living in the lake can only be found there.

But Burundi is also one of the poorest countries in the world, and **has been on CARE’s list of forgotten humanitarian crises every year bar one.** Of the almost 13 million inhabitants,⁶³ more than 70 percent live below the poverty line.⁶⁴ The state of nutrition in the country is alarming, with 52 percent of children under five chronically malnourished.⁶⁵ Rural communities are the worst affected.

COVID-19, limited inflows of development assistance and rising poverty have recently worsened the situation. Lack of reliable, safe drinking water and health care leave 1.8 million people in need of humanitarian assistance.⁶⁶

Burundi has been in economic crisis since 2015. The war in Ukraine and resulting lack of imports from Russia and Ukraine to Africa have further exacerbated the situation. This is compounded by a high inflation rate.

The consequences of climate change

The country is highly vulnerable to the consequences of climate change⁶⁷ and barely able to cope. Floods and torrential rains destroy infrastructure, fields and food supplies. Prolonged droughts lead to water shortages and crop failures. This puts people at risk of extreme hardship, as rain-fed agriculture is the main source of income for 90 percent of the population.⁶⁸ Natural disasters, and above all flooding, are the main reason why 85,000 people in the country must give up their homes.⁶⁹

Women work, men decide

In Burundi, more women than men work – most of them in agriculture.⁷⁰ However, women and young girls have less chance to overcome poverty. Constricting social norms, high birth rates, lack of resources for contraception and gender-based violence reinforce inequality. In addition, women in Burundi are still largely unrepresented in decision-making, especially at the local level. 80 percent of the representatives in local government are men.⁷¹

CARE in Burundi

CARE has been working in Burundi since 1994, initially focusing on emergency aid. Today, CARE supports and works with national civil society partner organisations to make a sustainable contribution to the social development of the country, with a focus on women and young people. This involves long-term funding and innovation. CARE promotes women’s economic skills and independence through village savings and loans groups (VSLAs), carries out preventive work against gender-based violence, and provides education on sexual and reproductive health.

1.8 million people need humanitarian aid⁷²

50% More than 50% of children under five are malnourished⁷³



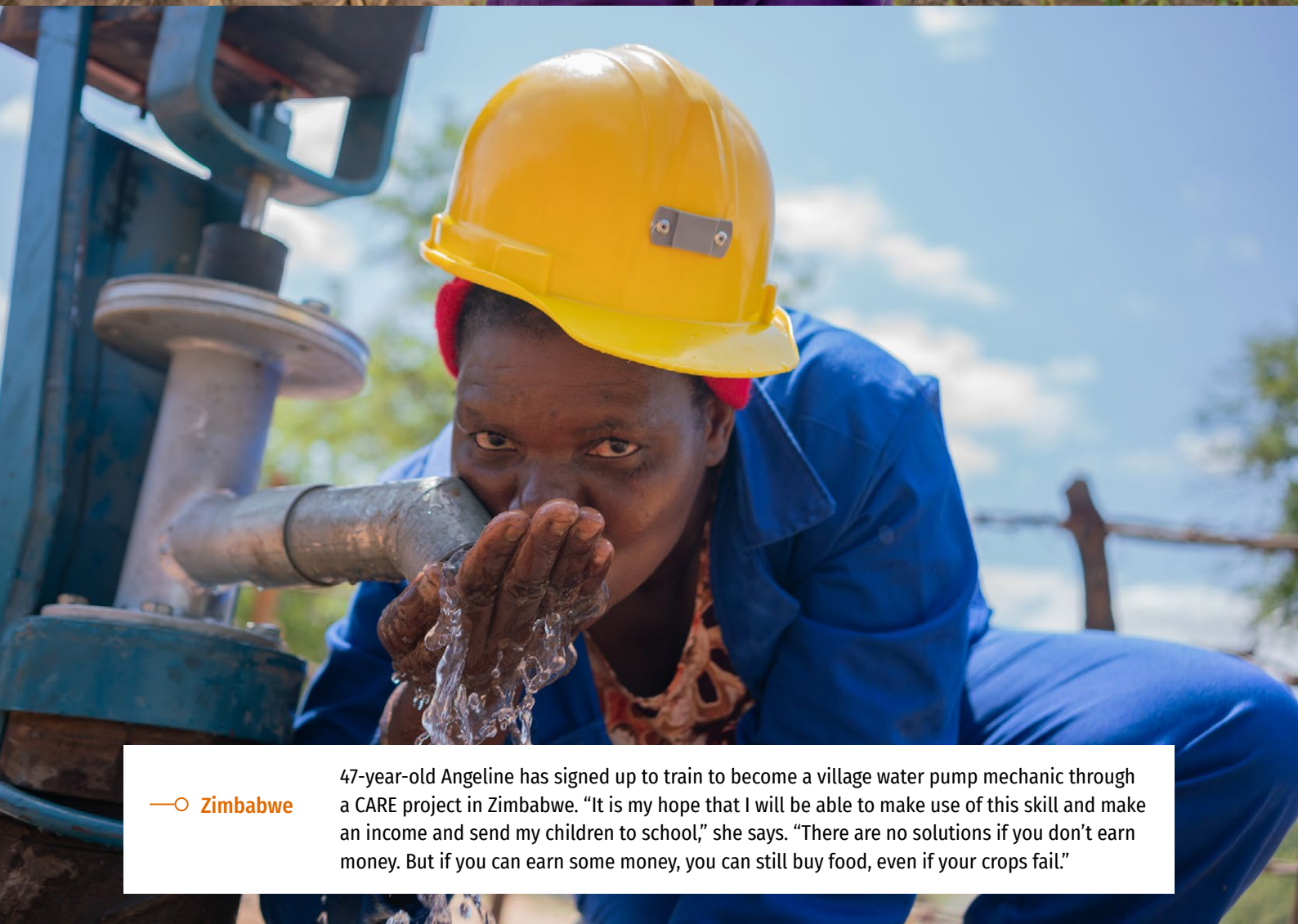
—○ **Burundi**

Chantal, 29, lives in a house that may collapse at any time due to flooding. She says: “I am worried about giving birth in this house soon. When it rains, I wake up my children. Nobody can sleep during the rain, so that they can flee at any time.”



—○ Zimbabwe

Lack of rain has led to many failed crops and families struggling to feed themselves in the region in Zimbabwe where Moreladies lives with her husband and three children. She says: "It's very painful to see the crops fail. After investing in crops and having nothing to harvest, it's really painful."



—○ Zimbabwe

47-year-old Angeline has signed up to train to become a village water pump mechanic through a CARE project in Zimbabwe. "It is my hope that I will be able to make use of this skill and make an income and send my children to school," she says. "There are no solutions if you don't earn money. But if you can earn some money, you can still buy food, even if your crops fail."

7

Zimbabwe: Between droughts and flash floods



In Zimbabwe, the consequences of climate change are becoming more apparent every year. Long periods of drought are often followed by heavy rains that cause widespread flooding on dust-dry soils. The weather extremes, known as climate shocks, devastate the livelihoods of large segments of the population. Zimbabwe is also frequently hit by cyclones that leave destruction in their wake.

About half of the approximately 15.6 million inhabitants live in extreme poverty.⁷⁶ Food insecurity is widespread, affecting more than 5.8 million people. About 74,000 children are acutely malnourished,⁷⁷ and nearly 27 percent show signs of impaired growth and development.⁷⁸

Families are struggling to survive

The agricultural sector, which is important for food production and supply, is dominated by small-scale farming structures. This leaves very little coping capacity to offset shortfalls in food production due to climate shocks. Southern Africa, including Zimbabwe, is also plagued by migratory locusts, which can eat fields bare and devour food supplies in a short time. But drought remains the biggest threat, though economic conditions are also causing many families to struggle to survive, particularly as inflation has risen rapidly.

The COVID-19 pandemic has reduced sources of income and food, leaving the population without access to essential supplies. High-quality seeds or fertilizers have

risen sharply in price or are almost impossible to obtain. Livestock farming is suffering from extended periods of drought, and there is a shortage of veterinary medicines. If livestock breeding and trade become impossible due to drought, many people lose their only source of income. Given the sharp rise in prices, people are no longer able to make ends meet through casual labour.

The need for humanitarian aid in Zimbabwe is growing. Households need support to obtain basic food supplies. COVID-19 placed the health system – already strained by a high number of malaria infections and the care of approximately 1.3 million people living with HIV/AIDS⁷⁹ – under further pressure. The lack of clean water and often inadequate sanitation and hygiene conditions also increase the risk of infectious disease outbreaks, especially in urban areas.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, at least 500,000 people from neighbouring countries have returned home.⁸⁰ After their – often involuntary – return, former migrants need income-generating opportunities to help them regain their footing.

CARE in Zimbabwe

CARE began working in Zimbabwe in 1992 in response to a severe drought. Since then, the climate crisis has further exacerbated food insecurity. To combat the ongoing drought, investment in water supply infrastructure is critical. Among other interventions, CARE is creating easy access to drinking water and irrigation facilities. This saves women and girls from making long journeys to water points. Other CARE projects in Zimbabwe include food assistance, creating climate-resilient livelihoods and promoting education and economic development.

Through the Takunda programme in Manicaland and Masvingo, CARE is working in 50 communities with partners such as the environmental organisation Environment Africa (EA). The focus is on increasing resilience to the effects of climate variability. The goal of the programme is to reduce disaster risk and make timely decisions for better agricultural yields through access to weather forecasts.

7 million people need humanitarian aid⁷⁴

50% Half of the population lives in extreme poverty⁷⁵



Climate crisis exacerbates lack of food

Mali:

Hunger, conflict and climate crisis



Mali is a vast landlocked country in the heart of the Sahel, where many crises converge. More than three quarters of the 21 million inhabitants live in poverty, and over 7.5 million people need humanitarian aid.⁸⁴ Food insecurity continues to rise. Climate change has led to frequent droughts and floods, resulting in crop failures. Soils are depleted, and fertilizers are lacking.

Malnutrition is widespread. Nearly one third of children under five suffer from impaired growth and development,⁸⁵ and over 300,000 are affected by acute malnutrition.⁸⁶ One in eight children of primary school age do not attend school.⁸⁷ Of the children who are enrolled, only one-third are girls.⁸⁸ Mali is ranked 184 out of 189 in the UNDP Human Development Index.⁸⁹

Hundreds of thousands fleeing violence

The consequences of the ongoing food crisis are exacerbated by armed conflict. Two coups in August 2020 and May 2021 rocked the country, bringing instability and uncertainty.⁹⁰ Fleeing or displaced by violence, hundreds of thousands of people have become homeless. They wander the country and across borders in search of protection, having lost all of their possessions. Often there is no chance of return.

In the areas where there is fighting, agricultural production has also decreased. Fields are not cultivated or new seeds are not sown. Armed groups have frequently reverted to burning harvests in cultivated fields.

This leads to a shortage of urgently needed food, in a country where food is already scarce. Since the 2012 famine in the Sahel, an average of 3.6 million people have been affected by food insecurity every year. That's 18 percent of the population.⁹¹

Children hide in fear

When people began to be displaced, there were reports of children fleeing alone. Others were hiding in houses out of fear. They were left to fend for themselves with no food or water. Parents who had to flee took children out of school and later could not send them back. With the savings from school fees, some families were able to find shelter.

Many children have been traumatized by violence. They do not have enough to eat and have little chance to resume their education. More than 2.5 million children have dropped out of the school system.⁹²

Women have also been severely challenged during this crisis. For the most part, it is the women who set out with children when the family has had to flee. In the regions where fighting has taken place, women report cases of physical, psychological and sexual violence. They and their children lack food and other resources such as access to medical care. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is widespread in Mali – nearly eight million girls and women have undergone FGM.⁹³

CARE in Mali

CARE has been working in Mali since 1975, helping people affected by hunger and conflict to secure food, among other interventions. CARE provides targeted support to women and children – for example through village savings and loans groups (VSLAs), the creation of earning opportunities and the promotion of education. CARE also works in Mali to combat FGM, child labour and human trafficking.



Eighth-highest child mortality rate in the world⁸¹

7.5 million people need humanitarian aid⁸²

3.9 More than 3.9 million children need humanitarian aid⁸³



—○ Mali

A group of women, who were displaced within Mali, are building a shelter together in Kolodougu. Two coups have left hundreds of thousands of people homeless in the country.



—○ Mali

A mother and son at a shelter for displaced people in Niono, Mali. Most of the families lost all their possessions as they fled.



—○ Cameroon

Hawa had to flee Cameroon with her children and nephew and now lives in Chad. “I can’t afford to buy food for my children,” she says. “I often spend a whole day not eating. This way, I can save what little I have left for my children.”

Cameroon: From crisis to crisis



Cameroon has repeatedly been hit by humanitarian crises over the past decade. In addition, there have been natural disasters, diseases such as cholera, and most recently, the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and of the war in Ukraine. 3.9 million people are in need of emergency humanitarian assistance⁹⁶ – about 14 percent of the population.

Cameroon's far north has been destabilised since 2014 by the insurgency of non-state armed groups. In 2022, there have been raids and attacks on civilians. Kidnappings and looting have also been reported.

The Sahel region has also been severely affected by climate change. Natural disasters are common, particularly floods. Food and resources are scarce.

Since 2016, there has been a high level of insecurity and armed violence in the northwest and southwest of the country. Many people have had to seek safety in other parts of Cameroon. Attacks on schools and lockdowns that have lasted for months have blocked the path to education for countless children. At last count, more than 3,000 schools in Cameroon were closed because of the crisis.⁹⁷

People on the move

Cameroon has welcomed more than 340,000 refugees from the Central African Republic. The number has been rising steadily since the crisis began in 2014. About one million people from Cameroon are fleeing their homeland.⁹⁸ They are seeking safety or have lost their livelihoods. They often lack access to health care or educational institutions.

11 percent of the population does not have enough to eat and is dependent on humanitarian aid. Before the crisis, more than two-thirds of the population in the northwest depended on agriculture. The insecure situation is now causing farmers to abandon their fields. This is leading to a decline in production and an increase in the price of basic foodstuffs. The effects of climate change and the spread of pests are having a long-term effect on harvests. Increased prices for seeds and fertilizers since the start of the war in Ukraine also contribute to food insecurity.

Drinking water supplies remain precarious in terms of quantity and quality. More than 1.8 million people need access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation. Water points in places where refugees and internally displaced persons are staying are often defective. There are hardly any latrines. Crowded shelters without clean water and adequate waste disposal expose people to diseases such as cholera and malaria.

CARE in Cameroon

CARE is working in Cameroon to contribute solutions to the many challenges. Secure income and access to clean water and balanced nutrition are basic requirements in the fight against poverty. CARE is also active in primary health care and HIV prevention.

In the northern regions of the country, **CARE is responding to the impact of violence. Rapid cash assistance, as well as medical support for those affected, is essential.** Refugees in Cameroon also receive psychosocial support through CARE. Cooperation with communities around the refugee camps helps to reduce tensions.

3.9 million people in need⁹⁴

1.8 million people have no safe access to drinking water and sanitation



Over 3,000 schools closed due to crisis⁹⁵

10

Niger: Crisis in the heart of the Sahel



Niger, mostly covered by the Sahara Desert, is a landlocked country in the Sahel region. The country lies on an important transit route for migrants heading to Europe, and has the world's fourth-largest uranium reserves. In general, it is a country of records: one of the hottest countries, it has the highest fertility rate and the highest population growth in the world. In the UNDP Human Development Index, however, which measures three fundamental aspects of human development – health, knowledge and income – Niger ranks close to the bottom.¹⁰¹

Multiple crises

Conflict, natural disasters, high levels of food insecurity and malnutrition combine with a lack of access to essential social services. Poverty is widespread. Agriculture is limited by chronic insecurity. Many families can barely sustain themselves.

More than 4.4 million people – over 17 percent of the population – are acutely food insecure. Around 6.8 million people do not have enough to eat throughout the year. Almost half of all children under the age of five are chronically malnourished.¹⁰²

Tens of thousands of refugees have arrived in Niger to escape attacks by armed groups in neighboring countries. There are 580,000 forcibly displaced people in Niger, including 360,000 refugees.

Child marriage

For many, child marriage is still seen as a path to economic growth and social advancement. Having many children is often regarded as a way of securing inheritance and wealth.¹⁰³ Niger has now introduced reforms to curb population growth. Laws have been passed so that family planning no longer has to be approved by girls' parents or husbands. Married and/or pregnant young girls who were previously not allowed to do so can now attend school.¹⁰⁴

CARE in Niger

CARE's presence in Niger was established in 1974 in response to famine. CARE's globally successful village savings and loan associations (VSLA) programme began in Niger more than 30 years ago. Since then, **CARE has established more than 38,000 VSLA groups in Niger, reaching nearly one million women.**

CARE works with more than 30 partner organisations in Niger, including HED Tamat, in the regions of Diffa, Maradi, Agadz, Tillabery, Tahoua and Dosso. Activities include helping with cash, shelter, food, clean water, hygiene equipment and sanitation. CARE provides sexual and reproductive health services, and is committed to combating gender-based violence and protecting children. Other areas of focus include cholera prevention and restorative nutrition for malnourished children. CARE provides information on the effects of climate change and gender-based violence and supports existing counselling centres for women and girls.

50% Almost half of children under five are chronically malnourished⁹⁹

4.4 More than 4.4 million people are acutely food insecure¹⁰⁰



—○ Niger

Women and children gather near a hospital in the Sahel region of Niger, which is facing a crisis of starvation and malnutrition.



—○ Niger

A participant in a red goat-breeding project, part of an initiative in Niger to support communities to become more resilient to climate change and shocks.

Recommendations

What can we do?

Our world is facing major challenges. Whether it is global climate change, the worldwide economic crisis, the unprecedented global food crisis, many conflicts – in Syria, Yemen, Myanmar, DRC, the Sahel, just to name but a few – or the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic; there are numerous events currently competing for media attention.

In 2023, the need for humanitarian aid will once again rise to record levels: around 339 million people are in need of life-saving aid, 65 million more than in the previous year. But the needs of all these people are not consistently in the media spotlight.

What can we do to ensure the voices and the stories of those in need are heard? We asked people from different parts of the world to recommend their solutions. Representatives from politics, the media, people affected by crises and experts from CARE partner organisations provide their views on how we can draw more attention to the situations faced by people in humanitarian crises.



Dr. Martin Scott, Dr. Kate Wright and Prof. Mel Bunce,
School for International Development, University of East Anglia

“It’s just not news” – This is the defence many journalists use to explain why they routinely fail to cover humanitarian crises – despite the immense scale of human suffering. In doing so, they blame ‘news values’, or the implicit criteria for story selection commonly used within newsrooms. These criteria prioritise dramatic, timely, familiar, unambiguous, and easy-to-explain stories, which are assumed to resonate with their target audiences.

But ‘news values’ are neither natural, nor universal. They are socially constructed – and can be modified, adapted, and challenged. We know this because there are some [humanitarian journalists](#) – working largely for specialist international news outlets such as [Devex](#), [HumAngle](#), [The New Humanitarian](#) – who do routinely cover humanitarian crises, even when there is no obvious ‘breaking news’.

For instance, in 2021, when the humanitarian crisis in eastern Ukraine was being neglected by almost every news outlet, The New Humanitarian published multiple, in-depth stories about the impact of the COVID pandemic on the conflict, and the inadequacies of mental health support for children affected by the war. In doing so, they demonstrate that another kind of journalism is possible.

We argue that, to ensure more attention for under-reported crises, we need to celebrate and support more diverse understandings of ‘good’ journalism. In particular, humanitarian journalists need more, transparent, reliable, and diverse sources of funding if they are to continue to draw public and political attention to ‘forgotten’ crises. As rapid increases in humanitarian need around the world continue to outstrip levels of international humanitarian support, this form of reporting is more important than ever.



Moctar Traore,
from Mopti, Mali

I am 62 years old and I live in a village called Syn in the centre of Mali, in the Mopti region. Our community is suffering from the effects of the multi-dimensional crisis that Mali has been experiencing since 2012. At the same time, we are also affected by the global COVID-19 pandemic. This year, our situation was further aggravated by the political embargo imposed on Mali and the effects of climate change.

In September 2022, heavy rains caused severe flooding in our village, displacing over 540 families. Crops, schools, health facilities and water infrastructure were destroyed. Small businesses had to be closed down. Our freedom of movement was severely restricted, food insecurity increased and endangered women and children in particular. We lost everything we had.

Our community has been working with CARE for years. CARE helpers were also one of the first to support us after the floods. We received tents, mosquito nets, blankets, soap and food, which included rice, millet, salt and oil. Through this aid, we were able to reduce the extent of the need.

I have not experienced a disaster like this year in Syn in over six decades. Now the school season is starting, but our children cannot go to school because our buildings are still under water. If nothing is done, the crisis will worsen in the coming months.

That is why we are calling on the government, international organisations and the media to come and see how we are living in Syn. They need to come and collect evidence of the impact of climate change and the current insecurity. This is the only way to create more awareness.



Asker Mohamed,
Secretary General of HED-TAMAT, a development NGO in Niger

The main multi-sectoral humanitarian needs assessment tool in Niger, as elsewhere, is the Humanitarian Needs Overview, which is coordinated by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), with the support of other humanitarian actors. However, these needs assessments are concentrated on the conflict zones (Diffa, Sud Maradi and the three border zones), which are characterised by internal population displacements. As a result, these areas have attracted the attention of donors to date, and almost all humanitarian actors working in Niger are concentrated there.

By contrast, humanitarian interventions are very rare in the Agadez region, and the UNOCHA does not have an office base there. The region covers half of Niger's surface area and is experiencing multi-faceted crises. It contains areas that are highly affected by climatic variability and is subject to high levels of food insecurity. It is remote from and forgotten by the central government, and the investments needed for development have remained limited. Yet the areas are interconnected and the neglect of a crisis in one area has direct repercussions on other areas. For example, the precariousness of the Agadez region pushes young people to join armed groups which, in turn, fuels conflict and violence here and further south.



Mwiinde Sizyongo, from Choma, Zambia

In the rainy season of 2021/2022, our village was flooded four times. The water shot over the veranda into my house. Food and electrical appliances such as my fridge and cooker were completely soaked. The electricity supply was partially cut off. My vegetable garden and maize field were completely destroyed and the harvest failed.

We were visited by someone from the planning department of Choma Town Council. The person assessed the damage to the sewage system. As we speak, no work has been done on it yet. There was no media coverage either. Not a single radio or TV station came to report on our situation or to call for support. Yet the need was great: the floods were

so severe that they swept away my neighbour's vehicle, threatening to plunge into the main channel of the river. At the last minute, young men from our community rushed in to help and save the vehicle.

The media must be proactive and report on natural disasters like this. Because when a disaster is reported, it also puts the onus on local authorities to ensure that those affected get the necessary help they deserve. The state of our drainage system is unchanged because there is no one to control the local authorities or work with the affected people to put proper systems in place.



Mónica Silvana González, Standing Rapporteur for Humanitarian Aid, European Parliament

Today's world is affected by many humanitarian crises that should be given due attention. People are starving all around the world because of multiple overlapping crises, including conflicts, climate change, and COVID-19. Both the European Union, and more generally, the Global North, should do everything possible to address these situations.

The European institutions are important and powerful actors in this process. These humanitarian crises should be an integral part of our political agenda and official debates, which should include the voices and expertise of people working and living on the ground. Their first-hand experience is essential to guarantee that the action of the institutions is fit to respond effectively to the needs of the affected populations. Moreover, we have the responsibility to highlight how these crises affect disproportionately vulnerable groups such as women, children, persons with disabilities, LGBTQI+ people and others. The

European Union should rely more on local and regional representatives both on the ground and in our Member States. Promoting decentralised cooperation is necessary to extend the reach of humanitarian aid and to ensure that assistance is adapted to the realities of citizens.

Countries in the Global South are bearing the brunt of our actions, being disproportionately affected by the adverse impacts of climate change, while having contributed the least to it. We therefore have a responsibility to bring to the spotlight these 'forgotten crises'.

As standing rapporteur for humanitarian aid, my commitment is strong and clear. The European Union should continue being a leading humanitarian donor in the world, while ensuring that the non-conditionality of aid and the humanitarian aid principles are respected. This is the only way to make sure that no one is left behind.



Juma Majanga,
Reporter for VOA in Nairobi, Kenya

Reporting drives attention. So, if you ask me how do you ensure more attention for under-reported crises, the simple answer is more reporting. The question now, is how do we achieve that?

From a journalistic angle, the proximity aspect is key. It is great that COP27 took place this year in Africa, a continent that is facing adverse impacts of climate change, where people are dying from drought-induced hunger and conflicts linked to resource scarcity. Having such important discussions taking place at such a time helps drive global attention to what is happening in the continent.

I feel there is a gap on climate justice reporting. I think there is a need to break down the jargon and negotiations that go on in boardrooms, for people affected by the crisis to understand that it is not about 'them' but 'us'. Local

reporters in countries affected by climate change are aware of what is happening, but lack capacity to understand and adequately report on the situation. This is one of the reasons why most of these issues remain under-reported. Reporters from these regions, especially those from indigenous and marginalised communities, need to be equipped with proper training on how best they can report on the issues.

Supporting reporters to produce well-researched and in-depth stories on under-reported issues is key in bringing to the fore little-told crises. Partnerships between media outlets and experts, with experts providing commentaries and opinions on under-reported crises, can yield positive results – shining more light and drawing more attention.

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About CARE International

Founded in 1945, CARE International is a leading humanitarian organisation working around the globe to save lives, defeat poverty and achieve social justice. CARE has more than seven decades of experience helping people prepare for disasters, providing lifesaving assistance when a crisis hits, and helping communities recover after the emergency has passed. CARE places special focus on women and girls, who are often disproportionately affected by disasters.

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