

Collective NGO Statement on Release of the 2026 Global Humanitarian Overview 8 December 2025

This statement is issued on behalf of 89 local, national, regional, international, women-led, and refugee-led NGOs and NGO networks, alliances, and fora, including humanitarian organisations operating in countries covered by the 2026 Global Humanitarian Overview.

This has been a year like no other for millions of people enduring unimaginable hardship amid escalating conflicts, hunger, displacement, climate disasters and inequality. The number and intensity of conflicts worldwide are at their highest since modern records began in 1946, threatening global peace and security. The political pushback against inclusion and gender equality is already reversing hard won gains and threatening women and girls' rights worldwide, especially in conflict settings.

Violations of international humanitarian law – meted out with savage cruelty – are met with barely more than a shrug. Aid is obstructed, and humanitarian and healthcare workers are being killed or injured in record numbers. War crimes and crimes against humanity, including the use of starvation and gender-based violence as weapons, draw condemnation but little or no concrete action to protect civilians, fuelling the crisis of trust and legitimacy our sector is facing. Women of all ages, children, people living with disabilities, and older persons are among the hardest hit.

The humanitarian crises we are called to address result in large part from a lack of political leadership. Despite much-publicised peace deals, there is no political will to maintain peace or hold perpetrators of international crimes accountable. Many crises have persisted for decades, with a total failure to address the underlying causes.

Brutal cuts to humanitarian assistance have plunged communities deeper into poverty and deprivation, stripping resources from local and national organizations that are first responders. In March, nearly half of women-led organisations feared they would have to shut down.¹ A more recent UN Women survey of civil society and women's rights organisations found nearly 100% were affected by aid cuts; for three-quarters, the impact was significant.² The Feminist Humanitarian Network has documented a disproportionate impact on organisations led by women with disabilities, young women, and indigenous women.³ Child protection capacity has also been drastically affected, with over half of surveyed local and national organisations losing 40% of child protection budgets.⁴ Even before this year's cuts, ODI research has shown that refugee-led organisations received a pittance in funding, just USD 49 million in 2024.⁵

¹ [At a breaking point: The impact of foreign aid cuts on women's organizations in humanitarian crises worldwide | Publications | UN Women – Headquarters](#)

² [UN Women: At Risk and Underfunded: How Funding Cuts Are Threatening Efforts to End Violence Against Women and Girls](#)

³ [FHN Feminist Humanitarian Action Report Final](#)

⁴ [Brief | Global Impact of Funding Cuts on Children and their Protection in Humanitarian Contexts | Alliance CHPA](#)

⁵ [How to finance refugee leadership: navigating a humanitarian system at breaking point | ODI: Think change](#)

The scale of suffering is impossible to capture, but some examples provide a window into the horror:

- The number and intensity of conflicts have more than doubled since 2010, reaching the highest number since 1946.⁶ Existing conflicts are more protracted, and new conflicts loom on the horizon. Spending on weapons has surged; revenues from sales of arms and military services reached a record USD 679 billion in 2024, 18 times the amount that was spent on humanitarian aid in the same year.⁷
- Between 2023 and 2024, the number of women and children killed in armed conflicts quadrupled compared with the previous two years.⁸ More than 1 in every 5 children now lives in a conflict zone.⁹ This year's annual report on children and armed conflict recorded a 45% increase in grave violations against children in 2024, compared with 2022.¹⁰ Widespread impunity allows violations against civilians to continue undeterred.
- Famine was declared in the Middle East for the first time under the IPC system, as civilians in Gaza were deliberately starved. Famine has also been confirmed by the IPC in Sudan, and is again a risk in South Sudan, while Haiti, Mali, and Yemen are hotspots of highest concern.¹¹ Millions of people in Afghanistan, Myanmar, and elsewhere are at emergency levels of acute food insecurity.¹²
- Climate change continues to devastate communities across the world, fuelling conflicts and displacement.
- Forced displacement has doubled in the past 10 years,¹³ but is met with decisions by states to cut funding and implement efforts to deter migration, externalise asylum procedures, reduce refugee protection space, and renege on their burden-sharing responsibilities. These policies and the lack of legal pathways for migration also contribute to the rise in human trafficking.¹⁴
- Women of all ages and girls in conflict settings, such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti, and Sudan, who are often at the forefront of community-led response, face unacceptable gender-based violence, including horrific sexual violence.¹⁵
- Women and girls are affected by high levels of reproductive violence, including deliberate destruction or blocking of sexual and reproductive healthcare. In 2023, 58% of maternal deaths, 50% of newborn deaths, and 51% of stillbirths occurred worldwide in 29 countries with humanitarian crises. This is expected to worsen, as many women of all ages and girls face life threatening consequences from the loss of access to quality health services.

⁶ [UCDP: Sharp increase in conflicts and wars - Uppsala University](#)

⁷ [SIPRI Top 100 arms producers see combined revenues surge as states rush to modernize and expand arsenals | SIPRI](#)

⁸ [UN Secretary-General Report on Women, Peace & Security](#)

⁹ [Stop the War on Children: Security for whom? \(2025\) - Save the Children's Resource Centre](#)

¹⁰ [Annual Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict – Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict](#)

¹¹ [Hunger Hotspots. FAO–WFP early warnings on acute food insecurity: November 2025 to May 2026 outlook. Rome.](#)

¹² [GRFC 2025 September Update | Food Security Information Network \(FSIN\)](#)

¹³ [Global Trends | UNHCR](#)

¹⁴ [UNODC global human trafficking report: detected victims up 25 per cent as more children are exploited and forced labour cases spike](#)

¹⁵ The level of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) was [recorded](#) as severe or extreme in 22 of 25 country operations. Conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) documented by the [UN](#) increased by 87% between 2022-2024. In 2024, sexual violence (SV) against girls increased by 35% compared with 2023.

The decline in funding that followed the COVID-19 response along with the progressive prioritisation, lightening, and boundary-setting, including the “hyper-prioritisation” of the 2025 GHO, have already left millions behind. The 2026 GHO edition has been tightened further. We appreciate the continued investment in evidence-based identification of both the full number of people in need of assistance, those most in need, and those to be targeted. But we warn that we have reached the limits of “severity of needs analysis”. As the Emergency Relief Coordinator noted, *“the cruel math of doing less with less”* comes down to an impossible choice of who lives, who does not and between *“saving lives today and giving people any chance at a future tomorrow”*.¹⁶

The loss of thousands of staff across the sector directly impacts communities. We have less capacity to coordinate, and to assess and meet the needs of people requiring assistance. This makes it even more critical to meaningfully include community, local and national actors, including local, national and international NGOs, in processes related to the Humanitarian Programme Cycle. Where the IASC-coordinated system is transitioning out, it will be important to ensure that needs are still captured and responded to. Without adequate handover to local humanitarian leaders, we are concerned about gaps in data and assistance provision. In some of these countries, such as Nigeria, millions of people, including children, are malnourished.¹⁷

Even with reduced capacity, what we do know is that needs are at unacceptable levels and continue to grow. Decline in development funding, in disarmament and peace efforts, and failure to limit the impacts of climate change mean that root causes remain unaddressed. Worryingly, states are withdrawing from multilateral agreements, such as the Ottawa Treaty, that were developed with the goal of better protecting civilians.

Despite broad public support for aid in most donor countries, politicians pander to anti-aid actors, adopting narratives and policies that create a sense of “us versus them” for their constituencies. We urge donors to resist these narratives and fully fund the 2026 GHO with timely, quality funding that reaches local and national organizations as directly as possible, including those led by women, which are often best placed to respond.

In 2025, communities worldwide felt the full effects of overreliance on a small set of donors. But humanitarian suffering anywhere is a concern for us all. We call upon all nations and additional stakeholders, including private sector, Multilateral and International Financial Institutions, to contribute principled and quality humanitarian funding.

In 2026, the Grand Bargain will mark its tenth “anniversary” with only limited reasons for celebration as evidenced by the content of this GHO. Instead of progress, we are witnessing regression on some of the system’s reforms’ elements that hold the highest transformative potential, especially cash, localisation, funding quality and the centrality of gender equality.

All of us who form part of the humanitarian architecture must recommit to accelerating true reform of the system to become more people-centred, efficient, leaner, plural, more agile, and more inclusive of and accountable to crisis-affected people, including those often marginalised due to age, gender, disability, or other diversity factors. Driven by the humanitarian imperative, this is a

¹⁶ [The Hyperprioritized Humanitarian System: When Saving Lives Today Means Sacrificing Tomorrow](#)

¹⁷ [Hunger Hotspots. FAO–WFP early warnings on acute food insecurity: November 2025 to May 2026 outlook. Rome.](#)

moment to re-evaluate our roles, embrace complementarity over competition,¹⁸ and reconsider who is best placed to respond to humanitarian needs.

This requires donors especially, but also intermediaries, to deliver on their commitments to reform, with priority to localisation and equitable partnerships, quality funding, risk sharing, gender responsive cash programming, and local leadership and participation. We urge UN agencies to not only be inclusive of local and national actors, including organisations led by women, refugees, and people living with disabilities, but to truly shift and devolve power and resources to them. All intermediaries should commit to rebalancing their role between direct implementation and as enablers of local and national organisations.

Donors must adapt. If they are to give less, then they must also reduce unnecessary layers of more expensive intermediaries that have become the default where and when they don't add value and prioritise intermediaries with a proven track record of genuine, equitable partnership with diverse local actors. It is not sufficient for donors to call for more efficiency and accountability from the intermediaries they fund. Donors must put efficiency, proximity, and accountability to affected people at the centre of their funding decisions to rebalance who has access to people with who has access to funding. Donors must demand – and demonstrate – greater transparency from intermediaries on funding flows, tracking and reporting on funding down to the last partner.

Donors must be less risk averse, and fund the most efficient, tried and tested modalities that save lives and restore dignity more effectively. Failure to invest in proven cash modalities is no longer acceptable. More quality funding must be channelled through an eco-system of pooled funds, including NGO led pooled funds. Any increase to UN country based pooled funds must be conditional to 70-100% of CBPF going to local and national actors, with ambitious targets for WLOs, accompanied by CBPF's democratisation and radical simplification.¹⁹

It is past time to make the nexus happen. Coordinating humanitarian, development, peace, and climate efforts with inclusion and gender equality at the centre is essential to reduce needs. This implies shifting to multi-year planning cycles for protracted crises, with light annual updates, to support more joint planning. Political action to prevent and end conflict is paramount. We need more ODA, including development and peace funding, directed to fragile and conflict-affected settings. While the share of humanitarian ODA surpassed development financing in protracted crises from 2022, it is now experiencing a freefall²⁰ that must be urgently addressed if we ever want to operationalise the nexus with programming that works coherently to achieve collective outcomes.

Lastly, we need political action to firmly defend humanitarian norms and values. We welcome initiatives to improve compliance and accountability, such as the Global Initiative to Galvanise Political Commitment to IHL and the Declaration for the Protection of Humanitarian Personnel. Such efforts remind us that the law is clear. What is lacking is the political will to respect it.

Violations must end. Parties to conflicts must uphold their obligations, and all governments must use their influence and fulfil their responsibility to end impunity and ensure consistent adherence to international law.

¹⁸ [Humanitarian Complementarity - ICVA](#)

¹⁹ [Rebalancing the Reset: Reflections on a 33% increase to CBPFs - ICVA](#)

²⁰ [Global Humanitarian Assistance \(GHA\) report 2025 | ALNAP](#)

Signatories:

1. ABAAD-Resource Center for Gender Equality
2. Abs Development Organization for Woman & Child
3. ACT Alliance
4. Action Against Hunger (ACF)
5. ADRA Germany
6. ADRI, Association pour le développement rural intégral
7. Africa Humanitarian Action
8. Anglican Missions
9. Arab Council Supporting Fair Trails and Human Rights (ACSFT)
10. CARE
11. Caritas Internationalis
12. Caritas MONA (Middle East and North Africa Region)
13. Christian Aid
14. Christian World Service Aotearoa New Zealand
15. Church World Service
16. Community Advocacy and Awareness Trust
17. Community Empowerment for Peace and Development (CEPAD)
18. Community Humanitarian Emergency Board (COHEB)
19. COSAPAD
20. DanChurchAid (DCA)
21. Danish Refugee Council
22. Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe
23. Dóchas
24. Finn Church Aid
25. Finnish Refugee Council
26. Focus Droits et Accès (FDA)
27. Food Against Hunger (FAH)
28. Formation Awareness & Community Empowerment Society (FACES) Pakistan
29. Fundamental Human Rights & Rural Development Association (FHRRDA)
30. Gargaar Relief and Development Organization (GREDO)
31. Gender And Community Empowerment Initiative (GECOME)
32. Ground Truth Solutions
33. HelpAge Deutschland
34. HelpAge International
35. Human Access for Partnerships and Development - HUMAN ACCESS
36. Humanity & Inclusion - Handicap International (HI)
37. IAWG
38. IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation
39. Initiative for Sustainable Peace
40. Instituto de Estudios sobre Conflictos y Acción Humanitaria (IECAH)
41. International Committee for Rehabilitation Aid to Afghanistan (ICRAA)
42. International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA)
43. International Emergency and Development Aid (IEDA Relief)
44. International Relief and Resilient Network (IRRN)
45. INTERSOS
46. Islamic Relief
47. Islamic Relief Agency (ISRA)
48. Jesuit Refugee Service
49. Joint Internal Displacement Profiling Service (JIPS)

50. Jordan Paramedic Society
51. Lasoona Relief and Development Organization
52. Les Scouts Tunisiens
53. Lif
54. Malteser International
55. MatchLocal
56. Mercy Corps
57. Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network Australia
58. National Alliance of Humanitarian Actors Bangladesh (NAHAB)
59. National Humanitarian Network Pakistan
60. Norwegian Refugee Council
61. Oxfam International
62. Pakistan Human Development Foundation (PHDF)
63. Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations Network (PNGO)
64. Peace Foundation Pakistan
65. People in Need
66. Plan International
67. Refugee Consortium of Kenya
68. Refugee-Led Organisation Network of Kenya (RELON-KENYA)
69. Save the Children
70. Scalabrini International Migration Network
71. Secours Islamique France (SIF)
72. Settlement Services International (SSI)
73. Society for Human & Environmental Development (SHED)
74. Society for Human Rights & Prisoners Aid (SHARP)
75. Solidarités International
76. State Development Organization (SDO)
77. Sustainable Action for Human Appeal (SAHA)
78. Tamdeen Youth Foundation
79. Télécoms Sans Frontières
80. Terre des Hommes
81. The Council for International Development Aotearoa New Zealand
82. The National Educational and Environmental Development Society
83. Trócaire
84. VENRO - Association of German Development and Humanitarian Aid NGOs
85. Villagers Development Organization (VDO)
86. War Child Alliance
87. Welthungerhilfe
88. Women's Refugee Commission
89. Zamzam Foundation