

Caritas Australia joins call on Australian Government to Help Fight Famine

1 August 2022

Caritas Australia has joined many of Australia's leading aid and development organisations to urge the Australian Government to help prevent a humanitarian crisis.

[Help Fight Famine](#) is an alliance of groups calling for Australia to help prevent catastrophic loss of life as the combined threats of conflict, COVID-19, climate shocks and now the war in Ukraine, have created the perfect storm for an unprecedented global hunger crisis.

Today Kirsty Robertson, Caritas Australia's CEO, spoke at the Help Fight Famine launch in the Senate Courtyard at Parliament House in Canberra:

"We've all heard the statistics but there are faces behind those statistics. I've just come back from Ethiopia and the reality on the ground is even more catastrophic than the numbers suggest."

"Imagine losing all of your crops and livestock to drought. Imagine being a single mum to four children, but only being able to feed them every second day. Imagine walking 18 hours to get one jerry can of muddy water because that is the only option."

"I met people living this life on a recent trip to Ethiopia. There are millions of people facing similar problems across the Horn of Africa, and indeed across the world. The time to act is now."

Today Help Fight Famine launched a budget submission paper which outlines the practical steps Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Treasurer Jim Chalmers should take when the new 2022/23 budget is delivered on October 25.

The paper calls for the Albanese Government to deliver an urgent \$150 million Famine Prevention Package to stop a catastrophe in the worst-affected hunger hotspots in the Horn of Africa, Afghanistan, Syria and Yemen. Help Fight Famine also calls out the need to invest in a long-term, targeted Global Food Security Strategy, and include measures to strengthen resilience of the Asia Pacific region to climate change, disasters, and economic shocks.

"The war in Ukraine has sent food prices skyrocketing around the world with the most vulnerable, women and children especially hard hit. Without immediate and urgent action, the deepening hunger crisis will kill more people annually than the entire COVID-19 pandemic," said Damian Spruce, Caritas Australia's Associate Director for Advocacy.

"We're calling on the government to face its first humanitarian test. The Prime Minister has said that international aid is the right thing to do and in Australia's interest as a nation – but now will he commit to averting a humanitarian catastrophe? We can help save millions of lives from starvation if we act now."

Supporters can email their local MP and ask them to Help Fight Famine at

<https://www.caritas.org.au/act/help-fight-famine/>

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