

Caritas Australia appeals for support to heal Gaza amid ceasefire.

The war in Gaza has claimed the lives of over 45,000 people, most of them civilians, with at least a third of them children. Thousands remain missing under 40 million tons of rubble, which is a result of the destruction of over two thirds of the buildings in Gaza.

Many of these deaths were due to military action, but people have also died from malnutrition, dehydration, disease, hypothermia, and a lack of treatment for chronic medical conditions. Deaths such as these can be prevented by open humanitarian corridors and well financed aid but remain a severe risk even in the context of a ceasefire.

“While a ceasefire symbolises some hope for civilians in Gaza, much of the physical suffering will continue in the coming weeks and months” said **Sally Thomas, Humanitarian Manager at Caritas Australia**. “Psychological trauma could now intensify as people take stock of what they have endured and lost and start to think about rebuilding their lives.”

“As the threat of bombs and missiles abates, we must turn our attention to preventing further loss of life by providing access to necessities, as well as helping communities rebuild their lives and those of their children.”

The level of destruction is a catastrophic blow to the people of Gaza, 80 percent of whom were dependent on aid prior to this conflict. This harsh reality means that any sort of return to pre-war normality will be dependent on robust humanitarian aid from the international community.

Caritas Australia has been supporting partner agencies in the region since the outbreak of conflict in October 2023, and for many years before. Partners such as CRS have been providing food, shelter and hygiene supplies, and cash assistance, to more than one million people in Gaza.

Caritas Jerusalem has also been working on the frontlines, with 75 staff located across the North and South of Gaza. Two team members have tragically lost their lives, with many having lost family members. All Caritas Jerusalem staff in Gaza have been displaced multiple times.

“The road to recovery physically and psychologically in Gaza will take decades to achieve, but we have the capacity to water the seeds of hope with our compassion today,” said Sally Thomas.

“Every life saved now is worth our efforts. Every warm bed or hot meal is a step forward for a family, however small. Every person supported financially, medically, or psychologically today is a person strengthened to play their part in a better future for their community,” she concluded.

To support Caritas Australia’s Gaza Appeal, visit www.caritas.org.au/gaza or call 1800 024 413 toll free.

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