

‘Unprecedented’ Scale of Human Devastation in 2023, Says Red Cross

Conflict and natural disasters have seen a huge need in various parts of the world this year.

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An aid worker has described the “unprecedented scale” of human devastation in 2023 as he warned of the “intense trauma” likely to impact victims in [Gaza](#) for decades to come.

The [British Red Cross](#) has launched four separate emergency appeals this year, as well as continuing its work to support those affected by the ongoing war in Ukraine.

The desperate situation brought about by conflict, earthquakes and floods across various parts of the globe can leave “deep trauma and psychological impacts on those affected”, especially children, Rory Moylan said.

Reflecting on the year’s events, the head of region for Europe and the Middle East at the British Red Cross told the PA news agency:

“2023 has seen human devastation on an unprecedented scale.

“As the conflict in Ukraine has continued, so has our Ukraine Crisis Appeal and this year we’ve launched our Turkey-Syria Earthquake Appeal, Morocco Earthquake Appeal, Libya Floods Appeal and [Israel](#) and Occupied Palestinian Territory Appeal.

“The fact we’ve had cause to launch four emergency appeals this year gives you an idea of the scale of the humanitarian support that is needed right now.”

He described a “desperate situation” in Gaza, where colleagues in the International

Committee of the Red Cross have told of children becoming sick as they face winter without proper clothing, having fled their homes to escape the bombing of the past two months.

Mr Moylan was part of a delegation of aid agencies who met the [King](#) at Buckingham Palace in October to brief him on the growing humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

At the time the charity confirmed the King had made a “generous donation” to its fundraising appeal for the region.

Some 1.9 million Gaza residents – more than 80% of the population – have been driven from their homes since Israel began its retaliation for the deadly October 7 attack by Hamas.

As the Israeli military assault continues, the United Nations has warned that more than half a million people in Gaza are starving due to “woefully insufficient” quantities of food entering the territory.

Mr Moylan told the PA news agency:

“The conflict in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory has created a desperate situation with staggering humanitarian needs and intolerable suffering.

“The people of Gaza need huge amounts of humanitarian support just to meet their most basic needs. [Winter](#) will only make it harder to meet those needs.”

He said the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS), which the British Red Cross works with, has so far supported more than 27,000 people as the population endures “a desperate situation and many mourn loved ones”.

Mr Moylan spoke of the lasting impact likely to be felt by those living there, saying:

“If the fighting stops tomorrow, the reconstruction and the recovery will take a decade or more.

“Mentally, people won’t ever recover in some cases.”

Calls for a ceasefire have been growing, with thousands of Palestinian lives lost in the past two months.

Mr Moylan said many donations to the Red Cross now are spent meeting people’s basic needs during a conflict such as food, water, medicine and blankets.

But he added:

“Donations also help us support people dealing with the trauma of losing loved ones and homes during disasters and conflict.

“This psychological support means we’re there for people in the worst moments of their lives and allows us to help people as they slowly try to recover from disasters and conflicts.”

He added:

“Conflicts and disasters will undoubtedly have ongoing, long-term psychological impact on people and especially children across the world. These impacts will be felt long after our attention in the UK has shifted to other crises.

More than two months on, civilians continue to pay the highest price of the conflict in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

Read our thread to find out how Red Cross Red Crescent teams are helping. ↓
pic.twitter.com/dVUydtReRH

— British Red Cross 🇬🇧 (@BritishRedCross) [December 21, 2023](#)

“In Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the intense trauma will impact people for decades.”

He spoke of the trauma from Hamas’s brutal October 7 attack, which he said will be felt by communities in Israel “for years to come”, including the survivors and the grieving, as well as the trauma for the hostages and their families.

Mr Moylan said the charity is keenly aware of the financial pressure on the public, with multiple appeals in different countries, but said even small donations make a big difference to the organisation’s work helping people on the ground.

He said:

“I think often people can feel that when they look at the scale of a crisis, they think, ‘Oh, well then what I give doesn’t matter’.

“It does. Small amounts really, really do add up. We’ve received so much in that way and it’s all very flexible. So it allows us to give flexibility to partners to design the best response for people as they need it. So we are always really appreciative of that.”

Mr Moylan added:

“I want to thank everyone who has donated to any of these British Red Cross emergency appeals this year for your generosity.

“Across Ukraine, Turkey, Syria, Morocco, Libya, Israel, the Occupied Palestinian Territories and beyond, thanks to your help we’ve been able to help people caught up in these awful disasters and endure the most difficult circumstances imaginable.

“I have seen on the ground the difference these donations have made and continue to make.”

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