

A close-up portrait of a woman with dark skin, looking directly at the camera. She is wearing a blue and purple patterned dress with intricate white embroidery. A large, flat, blue tray is balanced on her head. The background is a blurred natural setting with dry grass and trees.

OXFAM
CLOSEUP

FALL 2025

THE HUMAN IMPACT OF USAID CUTS

LIFESAVING WORK ON THE LINE

IN THIS ISSUE:

- › LOOKING BACK AT OUR HURRICANE KATRINA RESPONSE EFFORT
- › HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCY UPDATES
- › THE CASE FOR MORE WOMEN LEADERS



OXFAM

The future is equal

LEAVE A LEGACY



Ngakutoth Biel, who lives in a camp for South Sudanese refugees in Gambella, Ethiopia, shares a smile with her young child. *Petterik Wiggers/Oxfam*



The problems that need to be tackled are huge, but we can all do something.

LEAVING A LEGACY IS SOMETHING I CAN DO.

MARGO, OXFAM SUPPORTER



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DEAR FRIENDS,

This summer I traveled to the Democratic Republic of Congo, where I witnessed firsthand the human impacts of the Trump administration's cuts to U.S. foreign assistance. The abrupt withdrawal of aid in February came at the same time that violent conflict was escalating in the eastern part of the country, leaving displaced and desperate families without vital resources at the moment aid was needed most.

I was moved by the stories of people like Gladys, a community leader who works for our partner organization Fédération des Organisations des Producteurs Agricoles du Congo. She was harassed and arrested for continuing to provide services to her community after her organization lost 60% of its funding overnight. Despite her trauma, she was determined that her story be heard.

Since the Trump administration cut off lifesaving support to millions of people globally, we have seen food, water, sanitation services, medicine, shelter, and other essential emergency relief stop entirely in many disaster and conflict areas around the world. These cuts are cruel and inhumane, and they undermine peace and stability everywhere. On page 4, you will read more about the impacts the USAID cuts are having on people Oxfam works with in Ethiopia and El Salvador, and what we are doing as an organization to advocate for foreign aid and humanitarian assistance. When I returned from my trip to the DRC, I headed to Washington, D.C., to share critical information with U.S. lawmakers on what I witnessed.

Oxfam has a long history of elevating the voices of community members who are affected by the results of inadequate government policies. On page 8, we reflect on the 20-year mark of Hurricane Katrina and Oxfam's first major domestic humanitarian effort supporting partners in the Gulf Coast with disaster relief and long-term coastal resilience measures.

In this issue, you will also get an update on our humanitarian emergency responses, including our response to the conflict in Gaza. Lastly, we highlight a program that for over a decade has been turning out global women leaders and ensuring that women are included in decision-making spaces.

Thank you for your unwavering commitment to support marginalized people and communities here in the U.S. and all around the world.



Abby Maxman
President & CEO, Oxfam America

OXFAM CLOSEUP

OXFAM AMERICA'S MEMBER MAGAZINE
FALL 2025 VOLUME 25, ISSUE 1

IN THE NEWS

Oxfam speaks out on taxing the ultra-rich, saving foreign aid, conflict in Gaza, and keeps the administration accountable.

2



THE USAID CRISIS AND ITS RIPPLE EFFECTS

Cuts to USAID have had devastating impacts on communities across the world.

4



HOW DISASTER BROUGHT US TOGETHER

Twenty years after Hurricane Katrina transformed Oxfam's approach to domestic operations, we continue to uplift communities in the South.

8



TOTAL SIEGE ON GAZA INTENTIONALLY STARVING PALESTINIANS

Ongoing conflict and blockade lead to famine in Gaza.

10



EMPOWERING WOMEN LEADERS DELIVERS POSITIVE IMPACTS FOR ALL

When women are in decision-making positions of power, poverty declines and society benefits.

12



Oxfam Closeup
FALL 2025

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SUMMER MATCHING GIFT CHALLENGE: GOAL ACHIEVED!

Thanks to your generosity, we've successfully reached our goal of raising \$1 million through the 2025 Summer Matching Gift Challenge Campaign!

This fund was made possible by an especially generous group of Oxfam supporters. To each and every donor: Your steadfast support fuels our mission and inspires real change. Every dollar raised helps us push forward in our fight against inequality, poverty, and injustice. From the bottom of our hearts—thank you!

COVER PHOTO: Adugk collects water in Gambella, Ethiopia, using a jerrycan provided by Oxfam. Adugk is one nearly 400,000 refugees in the region who depend on humanitarian assistance for survival. *Liban Hailu/Oxfam*

IN THE NEWS

LOOK. WATCH. LISTEN. JOIN THE CONVERSATION.

ENSURING THE ULTRA-RICH PAY THEIR FAIR SHARE

In January, Oxfam released our annual inequality report, *Takers, Not Makers*, timed with the kickoff of the World Economic Forum meeting in Davos, Switzerland, where the world's elite gather in what is effectively a festival of wealth. It also coincided with the inauguration of President Trump, making our update on the state of global inequality and billionaire wealth even more timely. This year's report illuminated how extreme wealth is not accumulated simply as a reward for extreme talent, regardless of the popularity of "rags-to-riches" stories; the majority of billionaire wealth—60% of it—is unearned, derived from either inheritance, monopoly power, or crony connections. In total, Oxfam received more than 40 media mentions, many in high-profile U.S. news outlets, including AP News, *Forbes*, NPR, NBC News, *Fortune*, *The Intercept*, and *The Washington Post*.

Since releasing the Davos report, Oxfam's additional analysis on the wealth of the 10 richest billionaires in the U.S. has received considerable pickup in the media, with spotlights in *Forbes*, CNN, *The Independent*, Benzinga, *The Daily Beast*, CBS Local News, ABC Local News, and more.



PROTECTING FOREIGN AID AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

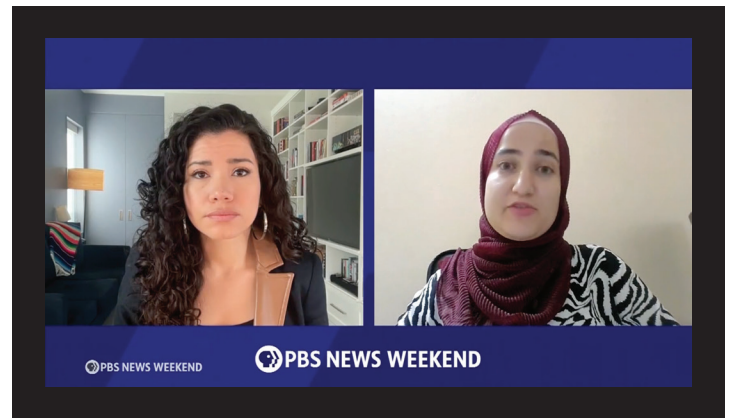
Since the Trump administration began its illegal assault on U.S. foreign assistance, Oxfam has been outspoken on the importance of humanitarian and development aid, and President and CEO Abby Maxman has been a leading voice among nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). We are elevating the voices of partners and impacted communities by collecting stories and doing media work, and we commissioned polling to underscore that these sweeping cuts are not supported by the majority of Americans.

Maxman has done TV and video interviews with outlets such as CNN, ABC News, and *Forbes*, and her statements on the impact of foreign aid cuts have appeared across publications and networks such as NBC, *The Washington Post*, and more.

► [READ MORE ABOUT OXFAM'S ADVOCACY FOR FOREIGN AID ON PAGE 4.](#)

"[USAID] is an organization that has had experience and expertise over decades, and to pull that out, it's like pulling the rug out. This has really been a cruel set of decisions and actions that have life-and-death consequences for millions of people."

—ABBY MAXMAN, PRESIDENT & CEO, OXFAM AMERICA



SERVING AS A VOICE FOR GAZA

Oxfam continues to advocate for the dignity and human rights of those suffering in Gaza, as well as access to food, clean water, and essential items. We have demanded that the Israeli government allow the safe and unfettered delivery of aid, condemned Israel's siege, and pushed for a permanent ceasefire and the release of all hostages and illegally detained prisoners. We continue to demand that proven,

effective aid is allowed to function, as the U.S. and Israel have backed a dangerous and insufficient alternative.

Oxfam and our U.S.-based spokespeople, including Abby Maxman, Scott Paul, and James Hoobler, as well as our Oxfam colleagues in the region, notably Bushra Khalidi and Ghada Al-Haddad, have been prominent voices in U.S. media advocating for the rights and dignity of Palestinians

in Gaza. Since December, Oxfam's work in Gaza has been covered in numerous outlets like BBC News, Al Jazeera, *The Boston Globe*, *The Washington Post*, *The Atlantic*, *Newsweek*, AP News, AFP, CBS News, CNN, *Democracy Now!*, *HuffPost*, NBC News, *The New York Times*, PBS News, and *USA Today*.

► **TURN TO PAGE 10 FOR THE LATEST ON OXFAM'S HUMANITARIAN WORK.**



HOLDING THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION ACCOUNTABLE

Since President Trump's inauguration, Oxfam has publicly responded to a number of his administration's actions that have increased inequality and attacked marginalized communities. We condemned mass deportations and the inhumane and economically disastrous decision to revoke Temporary Protected Status. We have also been critical of the administration's intention to withdraw from the Paris Agreement, its reinstitution of the Travel Ban, and its tax bill, which stripped tens of millions of Americans of their health care and critical support programs in order to shower the ultra-rich with tax handouts. Oxfam's commentary on these issues made its way into AP News, CNN, *The Guardian*, *The Washington Post*, and *The New York Times*, among other outlets.

THE ELIMINATION OF USAID AND ITS RIPPLE EFFECTS

THE LOSS OF USAID HAS HAD DEVASTATING IMPACTS ON COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE WORLD AS THESE CASE STUDIES FROM ETHIOPIA AND EL SALVADOR DEMONSTRATE, WRITES SHERSHAH ATIF.

The cuts to U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) funding in January 2025 put millions of lives at risk across the world and led to the shutdown of the agency in July. Oxfam America does not take U.S. government funding, but the effects of these funding cuts on the global aid system have forced organizations—including Oxfam—to scale back or shut down lifesaving programs in countries already facing extreme hardships. Local partners and Oxfam teams are witnessing the immediate consequences and ripple effects. To highlight the human cost of these decisions, here are two cases from Ethiopia and El Salvador that show the vital work that was funded by USAID, and what's now at stake.

LIFESAVING WATER WORK IN ETHIOPIA UNDER THREAT

One of the largest refugee settlements in Ethiopia, in the remote region of Gambella, hosts nearly 400,000 people—mostly women and young children—who depend on lifesaving services that are dwindling due to USAID cuts. Since 2014, Oxfam has been on the ground in all seven camps in Gambella to deliver access to water via boreholes, water treatment systems, and 62 miles of pipelines that serve thousands of families.

However, with the sudden funding cuts in 2025 coupled with aging infrastructure

and fewer resources, the humanitarian response in Gambella is under threat.

One striking example is water: The municipal water system in Gambella was built over a decade ago to serve a population of around 5,000. Today, Gambella and the surrounding settlements together count over 400,000 people. If the situation worsens, residents needing water will have to turn to the river or unprotected wells, risking disease, and host communities will face more competition for scarce water. This kind of strain is mirrored in schooling, health care, and employment. The region is not yet resilient enough to absorb the shock of a major humanitarian reduction.

Oxfam so far has managed to keep our water programs running, but the outlook is uncertain.

A portion of our Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) work is funded through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which in turn receives significant support from the U.S. government. After the USAID cuts, UNHCR had to reduce its budget allocation to Oxfam by 50%.

"The existing water supply system is proving insufficient to meet needs," explains WASH Coordinator Ameha Hailu, noting that on some days the system

can barely deliver eight to nine liters of water per person—well short of the minimum humanitarian standard of 15 liters per person per day. When we spoke to Hailu in May, he said, "We can sustain these operations through June 2025, but without renewed funding, our ability to continue will be compromised."

The cuts go beyond impacting UNHCR and its partners, like Oxfam. UNHCR Program officer Gabriel Gitonga Munene says, "It's a domino effect across the entire humanitarian landscape in Gambella. Critical services are vanishing."

Meanwhile, Puch Thijok, the chairman of Jewi refugee settlement and himself a 46-year-old refugee, is also witnessing firsthand the impact on the ground, and says, "We are hearing rumors that after some time we won't have food [at all]."

Since last year, refugees in Gambella have been surviving on just 60 percent of the recommended daily food ration, and now there is risk that the ration will be reduced further in the coming distributions.

"Oxfam isn't just a technical partner here," Munene notes. "They've also filled the gaps through their own fundraising. If we had to rely solely on UNHCR funds, the WASH program would face serious gaps."



// Humanitarian aid should never be about politics—
it is about human lives and dignity. //

GABRIEL GITONGA MUNENE, UNHCR PROGRAM OFFICER



CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT: Nyabile Wichluol, 24, and Nyakueth Gach, 25, use a water point installed by Oxfam in Jewi Camp, Gambella. *Maheder Haileselassie/Oxfam*; Nyhtuk Hukuch, a refugee in Gambella, poses with her children after receiving potable water within walking distance from their home. *Petterik Wiggers/Oxfam*; An Oxfam well in Mitumball, DRC. *Karla Capers/Oxfam*; Puch Thijok, chairman of the refugee committee in Gambella's Jewi Camp, speaks about the growing challenges faced by his community as humanitarian funding declines. *Liban Hailu/Oxfam*; Oxfam partner PROVIDA carries out program work in El Salvador to help support migrants who are now affected by USAID budget cuts. *Kevin Vladimir Vásquez/PROVIDA*



SO, WHAT'S NEXT?

Through local partnerships and community-led projects, Oxfam is striving to make programs more sustainable. But stopgap measures will not replace the need for robust funding. That is why we are urgently calling on international donors and stakeholders to remember places like Gambella during this global aid reduction.

"Humanitarian aid should never be about politics—it is about human lives and dignity," says Munene.

Oxfam in Ethiopia remains committed to working with UNHCR and all our partners to uphold the dignity and rights of refugees in Gambella. We urge the international community to join us. Lives depend on it.

MIGRATION CRISIS UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT

In El Salvador, the cuts to USAID funding have severely impacted a project called For Rights There Are No Borders, which was implemented by local partner PROVIDA. The project's objective was to provide hundreds of migrants with lifesaving support such as water, food, first aid, and psychological care at 10 critical transit points in the western part of the country. PROVIDA also helped

communities with wildfire preparedness and response. However, the reduction in funds has caused early termination of the project and dismissal of 15 members of the technical team.

"PROVIDA reduced its operations by 95 percent," says Eduardo Gonzalez, manager of the Integral Risk Management and Climate Change Program at PROVIDA.

"It is very difficult to work on everything that we had before with the project, and obviously the services are not the same. The days that we attend to do migratory monitoring are much less than before," he adds.

Because this route in El Salvador continues to be used by people traveling north, Gonzalez and his team were critical in collecting statistics to show evidence of the migrant crisis, as well as provide support to families.

Now, migrants at these transit points are without the psychological care, hygiene items, food, and means of communication to their families that PROVIDA was providing. Meanwhile, local communities will no longer receive the specialized equipment, workshops, and resources to respond and prepare for wildfires.

"Now, these communities must face these crises on their own," says Gonzalez.

HOW OXFAM—AND THE PUBLIC—IS RESPONDING

To investigate the Trump administration's claim that Americans support the cuts to USAID, Oxfam launched two national polls, and the results were clear: The U.S. public rejects the cuts to lifesaving aid.

Since January, more than 58,000 Oxfam supporters have signed petitions, sent emails, or called their members of Congress to urge them to protect foreign assistance funding and USAID. Based on the polling data and coupled with our work in Congress, around the world, and online, we can fight against those calling for an end to aid.


At Oxfam, we're seeing the devastating impacts of the Trump administration's reckless cuts to humanitarian aid, impacting families worldwide. Oxfam America is suing the Trump administration to stop its illegal attempts to dismantle USAID—but while that fight plays out in court, we need your voice to put pressure on Congress to act right now.

A CLOSER LOOK



Learn more about the communities impacted by cuts to humanitarian and development aid: oxf.am/closeup-usaid

ABOVE LEFT: Eduardo González, the program manager at PROVIDA, speaks about his team's humanitarian work and what is at stake after cuts to USAID. *Miguel Cartagena/PROVIDA* ABOVE RIGHT: USAID staff, government contractors and workers, international development and civil society organizations protest to protect USAID on February 5, 2025. *Karelia Pallan/Oxfam*



BECOME A CHANGEMAKER AND BE A PART OF SOMETHING BIGGER



**"I HAVE BEEN A SUPPORTER
OF OXFAM'S MISSION FOR
ALMOST 10 YEARS.**

As a monthly donor, I believe strongly in Oxfam's mission and unwavering commitment to saving lives during humanitarian crises, advancing women's rights and economic justice, and tackling the climate crisis head-on. Their work is vital and inspiring."

—CHRISTINE LA MAR, INDIANAPOLIS, IN

PHOTO: Chana is part of an aquaponics pilot project that teaches people living along the Mekong River in Cambodia how to grow vegetables using climate resilient methods. *Patrick Moran/Oxfam*

You are energized to create lasting change, and you want to join a community of people who understand change doesn't happen overnight. Together, it's how we move from charity to change, and from moments of giving to a movement for justice.

Be a part of something bigger. Become a recurring donor today and be an Oxfam ChangeMaker. Your like-minded community welcomes you!

Visit: oxf.am/closeup-changemakers.

**OXFAM
CHANGE
MAKERS**





HOW DISASTER BROUGHT US TOGETHER

TWENTY YEARS AFTER HURRICANE KATRINA TRANSFORMED OXFAM'S APPROACH TO DOMESTIC OPERATIONS, WE CONTINUE TO UPLIFT COMMUNITIES IN THE SOUTH, WRITES DIVYA AMLADI.

When Hurricane Katrina made landfall on August 29, 2005, it changed the Gulf Coast and the way Oxfam operates forever. "Katrina was like a cancer," says Telley Madina, a Louisiana resident and Oxfam's former senior Gulf Coast policy officer. "It ... put a great deal of strain on an already terrible infrastructure."

Like so many of you, we watched in horror as the government failed to respond. "We were watching the footage of people clamoring on their roofs, holding on to their chimneys, and it was so apparent that these folks, mainly Black folks, had been abandoned," recalls Minor Sinclair, the former head of Oxfam's domestic program. "We didn't do disaster relief [before Katrina] in the U.S., because we only respond when the local state systems collapse and the U.S. has funds for disaster relief that should be adequate."

Though we had never before launched a full domestic humanitarian response, Oxfam had been operating in the South since the '90s. We already had connections in rural areas, and what we lacked in logistics, Oxfam made up for in "reputation, ambition, and mission," says Sinclair.

Within the week, Oxfam's team was assessing the situation to determine

where we could have the most impact. We launched the Hurricane Katrina Response and Recovery Fund to channel money to communities. In total, we supported 23 partners through our Gulf Coast Equitable Recovery Program.

While media attention was focused on New Orleans, Oxfam targeted coastal areas in southern Mississippi and Louisiana where people experiencing poverty had been left behind. FEMA had set up a disaster recovery center in West Biloxi, Mississippi, a predominantly white area not badly affected by the storm. Without cars or any functioning public transportation, people in affected East Biloxi faced barriers to apply for aid. Oxfam brought East Biloxi city councilman Bill Stallworth to testify before the U.S. Homeland Affairs Committee about lack of access to aid. This was a major turning point in our advocacy for community empowerment.

BUILDING LOCAL NETWORKS

Our first partnership was with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), which was leading a caravan of aid to East Biloxi. We supported the effort, and from there, the program grew. We also backed Bill Stall-

worth with the establishment of the East Biloxi Coordination and Relief Center.

Oxfam gave a grant to the Mississippi Association of Cooperatives (MAC) to assist African American farmers with rebuilding, and we helped supply residents with food in the aftermath of markets being shut down. Oxfam and MAC also assisted farmers with their FEMA and Small Business Administration applications.

"Oxfam and Kellogg [the Kellogg Foundation funded Oxfam's post-Katrina work] stepped up with private money," says Ben Burkett, state coordinator for MAC. "They didn't just hit and run; they stayed for the long haul."

Prior to Katrina, there were 52 members in the cooperative. With the crops destroyed, many farmers decided to cut their losses and retire. Oxfam worked with MAC with an eye to long-term sustainability. The farmers went on to increase their capacity, expand operations, and increase the number of local and regional markets they supplied. Oxfam still works with MAC today.

Oxfam's Katrina response ended up being a five-year partner-led program. In many cases, as with the East Biloxi Center, we



The East Biloxi Coordination and Relief Center was established in 2005 as a one-stop shop to help residents of East Biloxi, Mississippi, with all aspects of their recovery. Julia Cheng/Oxfam America

“When I saw that not enough was being done for my community after Hurricane Katrina, I started the East Biloxi Coordination and Relief Center with a grant from Oxfam America. FEMA took eight weeks after Katrina to have a presence in East Biloxi, and help was urgently needed. Our organization helped citizens in the East Biloxi neighborhood when no one else would.”

—AN EXCERPT FROM BILL STALLWORTH’S TESTIMONY TO THE COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS, PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

were supporting community leaders who were coming together to form organizations. In the second half of our response, we worked with immigrant groups because a large part of the reconstruction efforts were shouldered by immigrants. Another newly formed group we helped support was the Mississippi Immigrants Rights Alliance, which used a recreational vehicle to contact the state’s approximately 130,000 Latino residents about available services.

FOSTERING RESILIENCE IN THE SOUTH

We were transitioning to the next phase of our Gulf Coast work when the BP oil spill happened in 2010. The environmental disaster had devastating impacts on people who fished for a living. This time around, we had a playbook for the response. “We now had a network of organizations that knew each other, knew

how to work together, and trusted each other and had the capacity to understand both the disaster elements but also the rebuilding,” says Sinclair.

We worked with partners in Louisiana and Mississippi to establish workforce development programs to help people who had lost their livelihoods pivot their careers and achieve economic security. We brought the Rev. Tyrone Edwards, executive director of Oxfam’s partner organization Zion Travelers Cooperative Center, to Capitol Hill to testify about the oil spill’s effects on coastal communities. We were able to influence the 2012 RESTORE Act, which ensured that the money BP and other companies paid in fines would go directly to the Gulf Coast.

Madina describes Oxfam’s coastal resilience and workforce development programming as “putting people in a position to win,” and that is something

we continue to do. Oxfam is an advocate for economic stability in the South. We partner with local Black women-led organizations to build a movement for change through our A New Era for Black Women initiative. We aim to secure job protections, workplace advancements, more pathways to jobs, and higher-paying jobs. Should another disaster strike, we want to make sure people are in the best position to move forward.

A CLOSER LOOK



Read more about Oxfam’s post-Katrina work in the Gulf Coast and southern U.S.: oxf.am/closeup-katrina

TOTAL SIEGE ON GAZA INTENTIONALLY STARVING PALESTINIANS

ONGOING CONFLICT AND BLOCKADE LEAD TO FAMINE IN GAZA.
CHRIS HUFSTADER REVIEWS THE SITUATION AND WHAT OXFAM'S
PARTNERS ARE DOING TO HELP PEOPLE SURVIVE.

When the ceasefire in Gaza ended in March, it took only a few weeks for the complete siege imposed by the Israeli government to begin starving people. By August, the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification confirmed famine in Gaza City and nearby areas, and was projected to expand to Deir al-Balah and Khan Younis by the end of September. Half a million people in the Gaza Strip were facing catastrophic conditions, characterized by starvation, destitution and death. Another million people were facing emergency levels of hunger.

Roba, who works for Oxfam in Gaza, was experiencing firsthand the policy implemented by the Israeli government to intentionally starve the population of

Gaza. "You can't truly understand what starvation is until you've felt it, until it is no longer just a word, but a daily reality that consumes a life," she says.

During this post-ceasefire period, Oxfam's partners continued to provide clean water and hygiene items, and to repair sanitation systems for Palestinians displaced by the conflict. Our partners are helping farmers with seeds, tools, and repairs to irrigation systems so that they can restart agricultural production. In areas hosting displaced people, they provided seeds and equipment to help families start small vegetable gardens. Our partners also advised survivors of sexual violence how to find medical and psychological care.

But what they could not do after the end of April was deliver food, due to the complete blockade. There is \$2.5 million worth of Oxfam assistance stuck outside Gaza, including "110,000 items of humanitarian aid ... [such as] water bladders and tanks, hygiene, dignity [kits] and water testing kits, food parcels, soap, diapers, pipes, and latrine slabs," read a statement released by Oxfam in late July.

During this period, as they have since the beginning of the conflict, Oxfam supporters in the U.S. have urged their members of Congress and the president to support an immediate and permanent ceasefire, the return of all hostages and unjustly detained people, and unimpeded humanitarian access. Oxfam staff in Washington are also bringing this same set of recommendations to meetings on Capitol Hill.

As media coverage of Gaza exposes widespread starvation, Roba says a ceasefire can't come fast enough. "Starvation is not just physical, it is emotional. It steals a child's heart," she says. "And the worst part? It is preventable, if anyone stands against it ..."

"No one should have to beg for the right to survive."

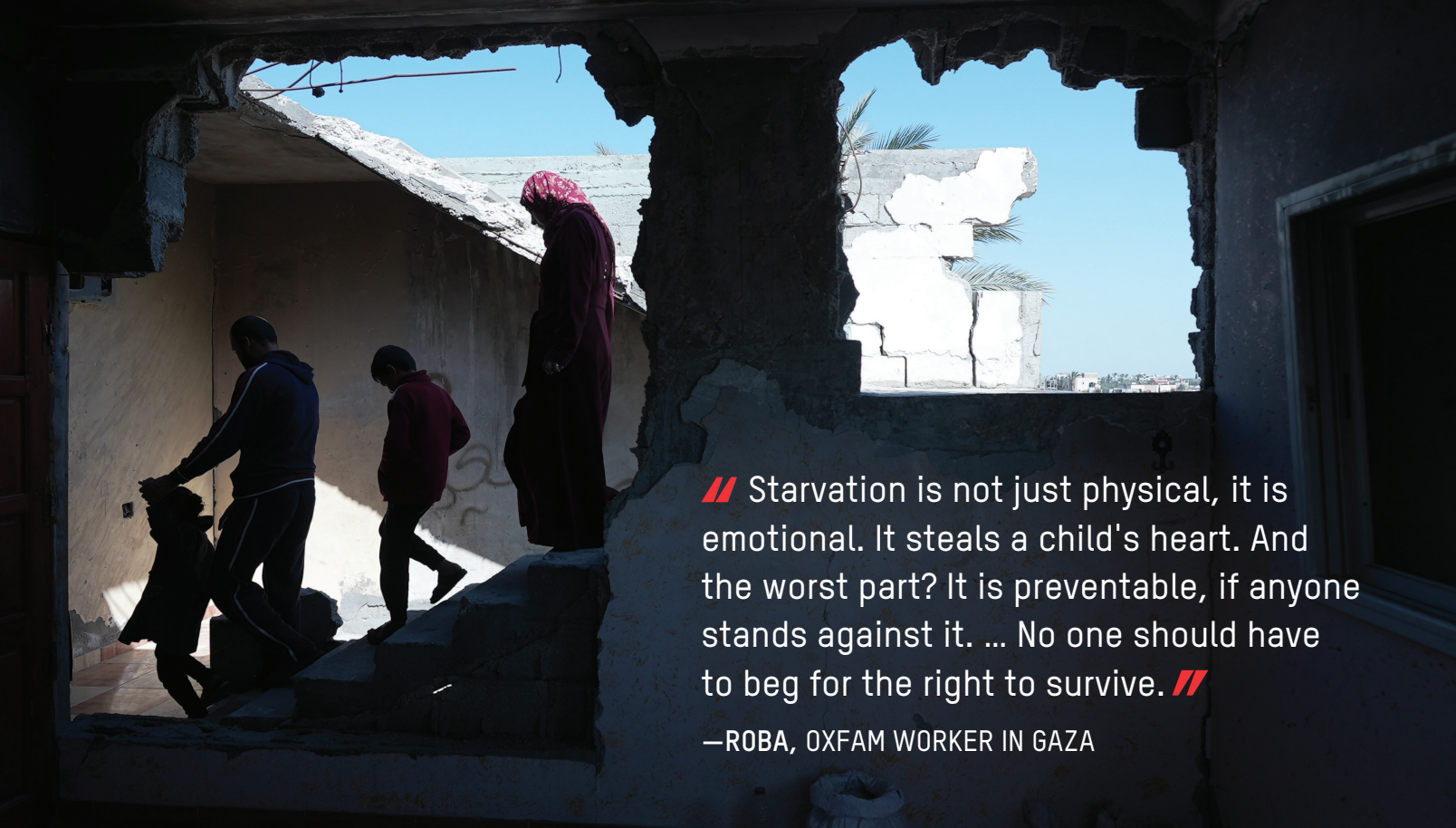


**A CLOSER
LOOK**



Find out what Oxfam and our partners
are doing in Gaza.: oxf.am/closeup-gaza

LEFT: People walk among destroyed buildings in Gaza City during the ceasefire in January 2025. All of the Gaza Strip has suffered widespread damage to buildings and infrastructure since October 2023. *Clémence Lagouardat / Oxfam* OPPOSITE PAGE: A family passes through a bombed-out building in Gaza. Nearly the entire population of Gaza has been displaced, many of them multiple times. *Alef Multimedia Company / Oxfam*



// Starvation is not just physical, it is emotional. It steals a child's heart. And the worst part? It is preventable, if anyone stands against it. ... No one should have to beg for the right to survive. //

—ROBA, OXFAM WORKER IN GAZA

GLOBAL HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCIES

The humanitarian crisis in Gaza is unfolding while Oxfam and our local humanitarian partners are also helping people in numerous other emergencies.

SUDAN

Oxfam and our partners in South Sudan and Chad are assisting Sudanese refugees fleeing conflict. More than 868,000 Sudanese people have fled to eastern Chad, and Oxfam is reaching 111,000 refugees with cash and water/sanitation/hygiene support. In South Sudan, Oxfam is working with a partner to address an outbreak of cholera affecting refugees and South Sudanese people near the border. We are providing water, building latrines, promoting good hygiene, and distributing soap and other items to help people avoid diseases. In recent months, Oxfam and our partners have assisted more than 240,000 refugees in South Sudan.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Decades of conflict in the eastern provinces of DRC have displaced 3.8 million people. Recent aid cuts have endangered programs designed to reduce the risk of disease and help women survivors of violence. An outbreak of cholera is threatening the lives of people across the region. Oxfam is working with local Congolese groups to provide food, clean water, sanitation, cash assistance, and hygiene kits for women and girls. Together, we are working to reach more than 400,000 people, many of them struggling to survive amid crisis levels of food insecurity.

MYANMAR

In March, a 7.7 magnitude earthquake hit Myanmar, where more than 19 million people were already in need of humanitarian assistance due to conflict. The earthquake killed nearly 4,000 people and displaced more than 5,000. Oxfam has been carrying out a comprehensive emergency relief operation, which includes the distribution of clean water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) support, mosquito nets, blankets, water purification tablets, materials for constructing temporary shelters, and cash assistance. We are also constructing emergency latrines to reduce the risk of disease outbreaks.

PHILIPPINES

Heavy seasonal monsoon rains coinciding with two tropical cyclones flooded large areas of northern Luzon in July. More than 1.9 million people are affected, with 200,000 people displaced from their homes. Oxfam Pilipinas, the Oxfam affiliate in the Philippines, is working closely with local groups to assess the damage to communities to provide safe water and temporary latrines, and to make repairs to permanent sanitation systems. We are also providing cash to affected people.

EMPOWERING WOMEN LEADERS DELIVERS POSITIVE IMPACTS FOR ALL

WHEN WOMEN ARE IN DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS OF POWER, POVERTY DECLINES AND SOCIETY BENEFITS. BY CHRIS HUFSTADER WITH REPORTING BY RACHANA MUKHIA IN NEPAL AND DAUD KAYISI IN MALAWI.

In the agricultural fields above the remote village of Haldyaam in western Nepal, locals grow wheat, rice, and vegetables with help from an irrigation system that pumps water uphill from a nearby river valley. Water is stored in a large cement tank before being channeled to their fields.

Pramila Bhul peers into the water storage tank and looks out to the wheat fields. Bhul, in her role as a representative for the farmers in her village in a municipal ward council, helped make this system by convincing the ward council to budget \$5,000 for its installation.

"The water lifting system allows us to plant crops throughout the year," says farmer Bimala Deuba. "Before, we had to wait for the monsoon rains to begin planting." Now, she says, "we no longer have to buy food; our harvests last the year."

The irrigation system is just one of several accomplishments of the council, on which Bhul has served since 2017. She was first appointed to the council as a representative of the Dalit people in her community. (The Dalit occupy the lowest

rung in the traditional South Asian hierarchy, and they have been historically subjected to widespread discrimination and social exclusion.)

During her first years on the council, Bhul realized she had a lot to learn. "I had limited knowledge and skills," she says. "The decision-making was dominated by male leaders. I did not have the knowledge to make substantial contributions or articulate the community's demands. I did not know the process, and I was not confident in public speaking."

Bhul found help with the Women's Leadership Platform, an organization supported by Oxfam in Nepal. She participated in leadership training, improved her public speaking skills, and studied proposal writing, budget planning, and local-level planning processes. Her efforts to defend the rights of women and lower-caste Dalit people in her community won her the trust of her constituents. This support gave her the confidence to advocate for funds for drinking water system improvements, training programs for women tailors, and scholarships for high school students.

In 2022 Bhul ran for reelection and won. "We reelected her because of her good work," says Indra Bhul (no relation), who lives in a neighborhood benefiting from a recently improved drinking water system.

PROFOUND, POSITIVE DEMOCRATIC IMPACTS

Oxfam supports the advancement of women leaders because they play a crucial role in making societies more equal and reducing poverty. Having women in positions of power promotes not only gender equality but also justice and inclusion for historically underrepresented communities, according to the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs. The institute's research shows that when women participate in politics, they tend to work across party lines. Their communities also experience improvements in quality of life that reflect priorities set by women and families, as well as by ethnic and racial minorities. The results are "profound positive and democratic impacts on communities, legislatures, political parties, and citizen's lives ... [that help] democracy deliver."



When women participate in politics, the results are “profound positive and democratic impacts on communities, legislatures, political parties, and citizen’s lives ... [that help] democracy deliver.”

Despite all the positives, women occupy only about 27% of parliamentary seats in the world, according to UN Women. The goal is to make women leaders “equal partners in decision-making about important issues such as violence against women, health, education, and climate change,” says Aivelu Ramisetty, who leads Oxfam America’s work on gender justice.

For more than 10 years, Oxfam has been funding women’s leadership projects in 30 countries. These projects focus on strengthening feminist coalitions and networks, and supporting aspiring women leaders through mentoring and training. Participants have run for political office at the local level up to the level of regional governor. Some participants are serving as appointed ministers.

PROMOTING WOMEN LEADERS IN MALAWI

Esther Jolobala, one of 40 women in Malawi’s 193-member Parliament, used her access to power to make positive changes in her home district. She has

helped improve water service in hospital maternity wards, and she found budgets for roads, bridges, and school construction in her district that helped to improve attendance and graduation rates for girls. She is supporting legislative amendments to raise the minimum age for marriage for girls to 18, and she backs a law to allow women to register joint ownership of land with their husbands, in order to clarify their land rights in case of divorce or if they become widowed.

Oxfam supports the Women’s Legal Resource Center’s work to promote participation in politics by women and youth. The center’s media campaigns intend to reach 1 million people in Malawi. Oxfam also supports Malawi’s Women’s Parliamentary Caucus, which encourages mentorship and peer-to-peer training for aspiring women politicians in media engagement, fundraising, and strategy development for cross-party collaboration. Efforts such as these helped expand the number of women members of Parliament (MPs) from 32 in 2009 to the current 40.



Jolobala participates in the Women’s Parliamentary Caucus, and she is committed to expanding the number of women in government. “We need more women in Parliament because we are 52% of the population,” she says. She affirms that Oxfam’s support for her and other women to participate in government is inspiring her to “change the narrative of just having men as members of Parliament.”

A CLOSER LOOK



Check out Oxfam’s work on gender justice and support for women leaders: oxf.am/closeup-genderjustice

ABOVE LEFT: Pramila Buhl, an elected member of a local ward council speaks at a meeting of a women’s cooperative in her village in western Nepal. *Rashik Maharjan/Oxfam*

ABOVE RIGHT: Esther Jolobala is one of 40 women in Malawi’s 193-member Parliament, and is a member of the Women’s Parliamentary Caucus. *Tavwana Chirwa/Oxfam*



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