

World Vision Insider

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Ethiopia Prepares for Deadly Drought

Eight million people in Ethiopia are in danger of starvation, again.

Stripped of resources by successive years of drought and food shortages, they face the future with the remnants of their last harvest, and some food hand-outs from the government.

At this time last year, the people of Ethiopia were in a similar situation—limited rainfall reduced harvests, cattle were dying, and by June, 4.6 million people were at risk from the food shortage and drought.

Barring an unusually abundant spring rainfall, it is certain that within the next few months emergency food relief will again be necessary in Ethiopia. May and June of this year are expected to be more difficult for Ethiopians than last year.

It is difficult to imagine how the people who have been kept alive by food hand-outs and meager harvests could survive another period of severe hunger so soon.

World Vision has the chance to join with the Ethiopian government and other partners in a preemptive response that will position food for the crisis months ahead. World Vision is already preparing for this major emergency.

The Ethiopian government, the UN, donors, and NGOs including World Vision have worked together to assess the likely impact of the drought and hunger. We agree that, nation-wide over the next 12 months, as many as eight million people will need help. In World Vision's project areas we can help 200,000 of the most vulnerable people. For that we will need more than 36,000

tons of grain. World Vision's office in Ethiopia has the experienced staff and storage capacity to handle this amount.

Please pray for us as we prepare this response. If we wait until CNN broadcasts pictures of skeletal children, it will be too late. This year we can be prepared before the crisis claims thousands of lives.

Clashes Slow Relief Work in Lebanon

Recent clashes between Israeli troops and Hezbollah guerrillas have impeded World Vision's planned relief response in southern Lebanon.

"We have recently hired a relief coordinator to plan our response in the event of the hoped-for withdrawal of Israeli forces from the south of Lebanon," explains Country Director Bruce Menser. "But with the escalation of violence, the opportunity to extend our programs to reach the refugees in south Lebanon diminishes. We hope that Syria and Israel can return to the negotiations."

A recent study by the UNDP estimates that \$1 billion will be needed over eight years to repair infrastructure, rehabilitate the environment, and promote economic growth.

With its Palestinian partners in south Lebanon, World Vision currently supports vocational training and preventive health care at Palestinian refugee camps, as well as income generation projects with the local Lebanese communities.

World Vision

Evacuation in Kosovo Follows Attack

Renewed violence in parts of Kosovo has threatened the lives of several World Vision staff members and prompted a partial in-country evacuation.

Last Thursday, World Vision's site manager in Mitrovica, Rudy Scholaert was shot at four times as he sped from a mob of 500 angry Serbs who had surrounded, then hit and kicked his car. Moments later, Community Services worker Vito Castelo-Branco drove through the same crowd, and his windshield was smashed and car panels damaged before he managed to flee.

World Vision evacuated its staff from the Serbian-dominated areas of this

ethnically divided city the next day but maintained operations at its shelter, transit center, and other programs focused on health, community services, and peace and reconciliation.

Ten deaths have been reported since early February when the violence flared in Mitrovica following an air attack on a bus load of Serb refugees.

Mr. Scholaert affirmed the organization's commitment to the people of Mitrovica and its region. "We need to be there. We need to continue with the peacebuilding, we can't just walk away."