

Germany doubled its humanitarian engagement in Africa in 2016

Never before have so many people had to flee their homes as in 2016: more than 65 million refugees and internally displaced persons around the world fled from crises, violence and natural disasters. Africa is a particular focus of Germany's humanitarian assistance, alongside the huge humanitarian crisis in Syria and its neighbouring countries.



Image by 123RF

In large parts of Africa, people are fighting for their day-to-day survival. The situation in many crisis regions on the continent has worsened: existing conflicts are escalating, new ones are flaring up, and there are continuing climate-related natural disasters. The countries of sub-Saharan Africa are currently sheltering the largest number of refugees and internally displaced persons in the world. At the same time, the aid programmes for the crisis regions in Africa coordinated by the United Nations are underfunded.

The number of crisis regions in Africa is increasing

There was an unexpectedly high increase in the duration and scope of humanitarian crises in 2016, particularly in the case of the complex crises in Libya, the Horn of Africa (especially Somalia and Ethiopia), Sudan and South Sudan, the Central African Republic, the DR Congo, Burundi, Mali, Niger and the Lake Chad Basin. Several of these conflicts are impacting on neighbouring countries.

The greatest areas of need are food supplies, health and nutrition, improved water supplies, sanitation and hygiene, and the provision of shelters. These are therefore the focal points of the German Federal Foreign Office's humanitarian assistance, it said in a statement.

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Humanitarian assistance helps people affected by conflicts and disasters in Africa to secure their survival and build up a livelihood near their original homes. With these goals in mind, the Federal Foreign Office dovetails its humanitarian assistance with stabilisation and conflict prevention measures, so as to offer the people possibilities for development in the medium term.

In recent years the Federal Foreign Office has greatly increased its funding for humanitarian assistance, also stepping up its financial support for Africa. In 2016 alone, it more than doubled its aid measures compared with the previous year, providing some 270 million euros for aid projects in Africa. The Federal Foreign Office provided a total of over 1.3 billion euros to respond to humanitarian crises around the world in 2016.

The Federal Foreign Office works closely together on humanitarian projects with partners from UN organisations (e.g. World Food Programme, UNHCR), the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement and many non-governmental organisations.

Humanitarian protection is a priority particularly in areas affected by armed conflict. It is also important to provide the suffering population with food and other goods, and to ensure the provision of drinking water. Other urgent priorities include the provision of medical care and the treatment of acute cases of malnutrition. Projects to help refugees or internally displaced persons usually also include elements for the host communities, in a bid to foster peaceful coexistence despite the scarcity of resources.

Urging further engagement

The Federal Foreign Office will continue its humanitarian engagement in Africa's crisis regions this year in order to make it possible for people to survive in dignity and safety. As co-host of the Humanitarian Conference on Nigeria and the Lake Chad Region being held in Oslo on February 24, 2017, Germany will continue to urge others to provide political and financial support for humanitarian assistance in the crisis region.

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