



MEMBER CHARITIES | TELL-A-FRIEND | CONTACT US

SEARCH

Home About Us Our Charities Workplace Giving Newsroom Member Services **Donate Now**



## POLITICAL TURMOIL, EPIDEMIC THREATEN ZIMBABWE AID

*Paul Lagasse  
December 2008*

Throughout Zimbabwe, Global Impact charities are struggling to resume distribution of vitally needed aid following the temporary halt ordered last summer.

In addition to widespread malnutrition, this southern African country is reeling from crop failure, economic collapse and a rapidly spreading outbreak of cholera and accelerating civic violence.

According to the United Nations, 5 million people—nearly half of the country’s population—will require food aid to survive the “hungry season” from January to March.

The meltdown of the country’s economy has caused inflation rates to soar and the unemployment rate to climb near 90 percent. Compounding the problem, more than one in three adult Zimbabweans has HIV/AIDS—one of the world’s highest infection rates.

In the summer of 2008 the Zimbabwean government ordered international aid organizations to cease operations, accusing them of stirring up unrest following contested national elections. When the ban was lifted three months later, aid agencies encountered a situation dramatically worse than it had been just a few months previously.

In early November aid workers began receiving reports of cholera in Harare, Zimbabwe’s capital; within weeks, nearly 12,000 cases had been reported across the country. Unchecked by doctors who lack medicines and spread by contaminated water sources that for many are their only water supply, the disease has ravaged the population, with the latest figures showing more than a thousand deaths and more than 20,000 infected. Zimbabwe’s minister of health and child welfare has declared a national emergency and appealed for help with the cholera epidemic.

### Political Stalemate Creates Fear, Paralysis



**Global Citizen E-Newsletter**  
E-mail Address



UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs  
This map shows the extent of cholera outbreaks throughout Zimbabwe as of early December, 2008. Click the image above to view a larger map.

[View Global Impact work in the region](#)



Photo: Sheila McKinnon/Africare

The current crisis dates from June 2007, when President Robert Mugabe instituted price controls on basic commodities, causing widespread food shortages and store closures.

The government also seized most of Zimbabwe's large commercial farms from their minority white owners, doling them out as favors to cronies. Other farms have been occupied by violent gangs claiming to be veterans of the independence war. Most of these farms, which once earned Zimbabwe the reputation as "Africa's breadbasket," have gone fallow.

Today, a political stalemate paralyzes Zimbabwe's government. Despite widespread fraud and intimidation, parliamentary elections in March cost Mugabe's ZANU-PF party its majority for the first time in nearly 30 years. Mugabe might well have lost the presidency had it not been for a wave of violence that claimed an estimated 1,500 lives and forced his rival, Morgan Tsvangirai of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) party, to withdraw from the June runoff election.

Despite international efforts to negotiate a power-sharing agreement, ZANU-PF officials refuse to cede control of key cabinet positions. Although Tsvangirai was named prime minister, his position carries little power.

#### Member Charities Active Since 1980

Global Impact charities have been active in Zimbabwe since the country won independence from Great Britain in 1980. In addition to providing food and medicine, they work with communities and empowerment groups to build water and sanitation infrastructures and train farmers and ranchers in self-sufficient and sustainable techniques. They also immunize children, register infant births and provide aid to vulnerable populations including children orphaned by AIDS, the rural elderly and the urban poor. Until they were forced to cease operations last summer, the aid groups had been making slow but gradual progress in recent years. Like the rest of the country, however, they have not been able to keep pace with the runaway inflation.

Your support will help Global Impact charities bring aid to millions of Zimbabweans at risk of becoming hungrier, sicker and more desperate to survive every day.

---

#### Global Impact Member Charities with Zimbabwe Programs

Many Global Impact charities have been active in Zimbabwe for decades. Since the lifting of the government's restrictions on international Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) in the summer of 2008, they have been struggling to get ahead of the spiraling increase in malnutrition and the accelerating spread of cholera.

Staff members for **World Vision** in Zimbabwe have accepted leadership roles in response to the government's appeal for help on the cholera epidemic. They will coordinate data collection, monitoring and general information management for three provinces in Zimbabwe. The agency has already distributed 200 cholera kits containing oral-rehydration salts, water-purifying drugs and other key items to some of the hardest hit areas.

**U.S. Fund for UNICEF** is helping fight malnutrition by supplying nutritious food supplements to therapeutic feeding centers established in hospitals throughout the country. UNICEF also trains parents of malnourished children to watch for signs of future malnutrition. UNICEF's other outreach programs also serve over 500,000 AIDS orphans.

As a member of the Action by Churches Together (ACT) International coalition, **Church World Service/CROP** is raising \$1.6 million to support farming training to alleviate short-term food insecurity for nearly 27,000 during the "hungry season," as well as rehabilitation for people displaced or injured by politically motivated violence.

Following the Zimbabwean government's decision in early September 2008 to allow foreign aid agencies to resume their fieldwork, **Plan USA** committed \$15 million over a 12-month period to support a range of poverty alleviation programs in eight districts throughout the country. Plan's programs are aimed at HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment, child and parental health and education, food security and clean water and sanitation systems.

Active in Zimbabwe since 1992, **CARE** partners with the World Food Programme to distribute maize, maize meal, and fertilizer to nearly a million people in all provinces of the country. CARE's Safety Net project offers supplementary meals to more than 600,000 children, helps traders reach isolated rural families with badly needed grain, helps Zimbabweans establish and run savings clubs to support small-scale income-generation activities, and helps farmers grow drought-resistant crops and develop seed banks.

Since 2006, **International Orthodox Christian Charities** has purchased, shipped and distributed more than \$3 million worth of medicines and medical supplies to clinics and hospitals throughout Zimbabwe. It has also provided wheelchairs and other ambulatory devices to a local organization for disabled people.

**Mercy Corps** is helping children, many orphaned by HIV/AIDS, to get free schooling in communities near urban areas. Mercy Corps also manages the education component of a multi-NGO program to assist orphans and vulnerable children in poverty-stricken urban neighborhoods. Community health programs in drought-prone regions are installing potable water systems and providing the training needed to use and maintain them.

**Heifer International** currently supports 15 active programs throughout Zimbabwe, including food security training for women and households run by children or people with HIV/AIDS, environmentally sensitive livestock husbandry, women's empowerment through life- and job-skills training and programs that support orphans and children with HIV/AIDS.

**Oxfam America** supports Christian Women for Love and Care in Zimbabwe (CWLCZ), a grassroots movement "working to address constraints on women and children due to conflict." Established in 2001, CWLCZ has more than 4,000 members who work for peace and reconciliation in their communities.

Active in Zimbabwe since shortly after independence from Great Britain, **Africare** works with rural cooperatives, villages and families to provide agricultural training, healthcare including HIV/AIDS treatment, support for entrepreneurial businesses, income-generation programs for the urban poor and health and sanitation infrastructure development. Emergency response to droughts and famines has also included the construction of dams and wells. Africare also helped transform a donated commercial farm into an 18,000-acre self-supporting training facility that has assisted more than 6,000 farmers in developing and improving their agricultural skills.

**United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR)** is helping hospitals by providing cholera kits to treat 2,600 people and supporting staff salaries. It is also providing food, medical supplies and 35 Medicine Boxes, containing critical medicines and supplies sufficient to treat 1,000 people for three months. UMCOR is also helping with rehabilitation and reconstruction of an old water system giving a dependable water supply to about 500,000 people.

**American Jewish World Service** currently supports nine local programs in Zimbabwe, including programs that train volunteer hospice caregivers; a trust fund for orphans; programs for at-risk girls such as girls' clubs, safe houses, job training and emergency shelter; and a range of programs for HIV/AIDS patients and their families including home-based care, income generation programs, prevention and health education for women and children and informational resources for children undergoing anti-retroviral therapy.

**Opportunity International** supports microlending programs and microfinance institutions in Zimbabwe. Currently, nearly \$58,000 has been loaned to more than 100 active loan clients.

**Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières** had treated more than 11,000 cholera patients by the end of December. It has also set up more than a dozen cholera

treatment centers, helped chlorinate water and disinfected homes.

[Contact Us](#) | [Member Charities](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Site Map](#) |  [RSS](#)  
© 2004–2008 Global Impact

GLOBAL IMPACT | 66 Canal Center Plaza, Suite 310 | Alexandria, VA 22314  
Local phone: 703.717.5200 | Toll free: 1.800.836.4620 | Fax: 703.717.5215