

THE next STEP

news for friends and partners



SPRING 2024: ISSUE 23

Humanitarian need in Gaza continues to skyrocket

In the midst of the growing humanitarian crisis, all of Humanity & Inclusion's efforts are now focused on Rafah, in the south of the Gaza Strip. It is in this area that 1.4 million people from the north have been ordered to move and are now living in appalling conditions, without food, drinking water, sanitation, medicine or adequate shelter.

Last month, HI's Deputy Director of International Operations, Jean-Pierre Delomier, visited Gaza and reported on the tragedies he saw firsthand.

"I was struck by the lines of [aid] trucks waiting to enter the Gaza Strip," said Delomier. "Humanitarian aid arrives in dribs and drabs in this trap where men, women, and children no longer know where to go. They need the most essential things: food, water, and shelter."

HI is alarmed by the massive number of civilian victims, the lack of safe humanitarian access and the limited number of trucks able to enter Gaza. Along with more than 800 organizations, HI is calling for an immediate ceasefire to put an end to the carnage and ensure the provision of humanitarian assistance.

HI teams in Gaza continue to bravely support those most impacted by this crisis.



Humanity & Inclusion volunteers bring solace and fun to displaced children in Rafah with games and activities.

A chance for Gaza's children to play amid war

Since October 7, 2023, more than 32,000 Palestinians have been killed, and more than 75,000 have been injured in Gaza by Israeli bombings. More than 300 Humanity & Inclusion staff, partners and volunteers work in 110 shelters throughout Gaza to aid those who have been displaced by armed violence.

"The biggest challenge in this war is dealing with my children's fear during the constant bombings," says Hani, HI Human Resource Officer in Gaza.

"Evacuation is tough—moving from one place to another with my two children with disabilities, trying to appear strong despite my own fears. Sadly, nowhere is safe in Gaza anymore."

The psychological weight of the violence and its effect on his children has been horrific. You are helping to provide Hani's children—and others like them—with moments of comfort. You've enabled HI teams to organize games and activities for over 18,000 kids.



Recreational activities include sports, games, singing, and dancing. If even for a few moments, you are alleviating some of the immense fear and anxiety experienced every day in Gaza.

Thank you for giving children in Gaza a chance to laugh and play together. Hani shares, "I dream of a day when a child can ask his mom, 'Why was there a war?' as something from the past."

After Syria quake, Noor walks again

Two earthquakes rocked Turkey and Syria in February 2023, in one of the deadliest natural disasters of the 21st century. With your support, our partners in Syria were able to set up emergency shelters and distribute supplies within the first 72 hours of the disaster. Survivors received hygiene kits, medical supplies, and orthopedic and mobility aids.

More than 12 months have passed since then. There is still a long road of healing and recovery ahead. But thanks to you, earthquake survivors in Syria continue to have the support they need to get back on their feet. Three-year-old Noor is among them.

Noor was playing at home in northwest Syria when the tremors started. Before anyone could react, the house collapsed on top of her and her family. She lay trapped in the rubble for three days before an emergency rescue crew found her.

"I lost my whole family in the earthquake," says her father. "Noor is the only child I have left."

The crew found Noor alive but seriously injured. Over the past year, she's had several operations to repair the damage to her left leg. Her right leg was amputated below the knee. Noor spent seven months in the hospital, recovering and learning to use her new prosthetic leg.

Noor sees HI's team for regular check-ins as she learns how to walk again. But Noor's recovery is more than just physical rehabilitation. Psychological support is just as critical. Our team is working with Noor to help her process this traumatic experience.

"My daughter was very nervous at first," said Noor's father, "but she's better now. She's even started playing."

Scan to see Noor's recovery!



Noor with her physical therapist, Fatima.

- 
3,698
 NURSING CARE SESSIONS
- 
4,175
 REHABILITATION SESSIONS
- 
719
 RISK EDUCATION SESSIONS
- 
1,723
 MOBILITY AIDS PROVIDED

All numbers are reported as of March 10, 2024.

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Logistics experts help vital support reach Sudanese refugees in Chad

A year of armed conflict in Sudan has strained humanitarian logistics, with more than 450,000 refugees fleeing through Darfur into Chad. As one of the poorest countries in the world, Chad is struggling to provide necessary aid to the influx of people.

“These are people who have lost everything, who lack everything: shelter, water, food,” says Florence Daunis, HI’s Director of International Programs. **“Many of them are injured and in need of medical care and rehabilitation to prevent permanent disabilities.”** Humanity & Inclusion works alongside Chadian authorities to provide medical and logistical aid. **Other than what you’ve helped us set up, there are hardly any other rehabilitation or psychological support services in Chad.**

As more refugees continue to arrive, seasonal floods have overflowed roadside ditches and blocked traffic for days, preventing aid from reaching critical locations. **You enabled our operational unit, Atlas Logistics, to restore Adré’s airstrip to provide a more efficient transport solution for**

humanitarian personnel and greater flexibility for medical evacuations. In 16 weeks of work, the team completely resurfaced and extended the tarmac and added a new drainage system! The United Nations Humanitarian Air Service is now flying in and out of the airstrip.

Thanks to you, HI’s rehabilitation team is also providing follow-up care to patients who have undergone surgeries by Doctors Without Borders.

One nine-year-old boy, **Abdellatif, receives treatment at a hospital near an eastern Chad refugee camp. He underwent surgery for paralysis caused by a gunshot wound, and there’s good news: our therapists say that Abdellatif now has some feeling in his legs!** It’s a hopeful sign that he might regain some mobility.

Nicknamed “Boss” by his friends at the hospital, he is optimistic and working hard on his rehab exercises to regain his strength.



Abdellatif does rehabilitation exercises with HI physical therapists.



Unloading supplies at one of HI's storage facilities.

Note from the Executive Director



The work that Humanity & Inclusion does is vital, and unfortunately, sometimes dangerous. There are ways that humanitarians can mitigate risk, but these are never foolproof.

On December 16, one of HI’s staff members in Gaza was killed with her four children while sheltering at their home in Nuseirat. An expert in job creation, Nahla had been working at HI since July 2023. As of today, there is no official explanation for the deadly explosion. On January 31, HI’s main office in Gaza City was completely destroyed in a separate explosion. Fortunately, no one was injured or killed in that attack, although the building is in ruins. Again, the cause of the explosion is unknown.

During times like this, our thoughts naturally turn to the brave and dedicated HI staff still on the job in Gaza and the West Bank. They tell us it helps to know that so many people the world over are concerned for their safety and that of their families. We can rebuild a building, but we cannot recreate a life.

When the fighting subsides, HI will get back to the essential work of standing with people with disabilities and others who are vulnerable in Gaza. Because that is what we do, in more than 60 countries, many of which are in or emerging from conflict. Do we hope for a better world one day? Of course. Until then, the courageous humanitarians at HI will be there to help those in need, even at some risk, because to do nothing is to enable chaos. Thank you for helping us with that challenge.

Jeff Meer
U.S. Executive Director
X / Twitter: @Jeff_HIUS
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2008 → 2012



THEN & NOW KANHA FROM CAMBODIA

Kanha, who survived an explosive remnant of war as a child, lives in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, and now works as a dressmaker. Today, Humanity & Inclusion is helping her resume her studies and become a specialist in orthopedic braces and artificial limbs.

In the 2005 incident, her father was killed and six-year-old Kanha lost her leg. Almost a year later, in January 2006, Kanha's mother helped her hobble on one leg into Humanity & Inclusion’s orthopedic workshop in Kompong Cham. **Staff gave Kanha crutches, fit her with a prosthetic leg, and provided physical therapy.** Thanks to her new leg, she was able to walk on her own and attend school again.

Eighteen years after her amputation, the young woman is determined to keep moving forward! Initially interested in fashion and design, Kanha received vocational training in dressmaking from HI. **Kanha recently decided that she wants to go back to school to become an ortho-prosthetist—someone who specializes in orthopedic braces and artificial limbs.**

“Without HI support, my life wouldn't have been the same,” says Kanha.



← 2023 →

Dogs with Jobs: Demining in Senegal

Forty years of conflict in the Casamance region of Senegal has contaminated about 300 acres with undetonated landmines. **Fortunately, our demining teams recently got some backup: four Belgian Shepherds named Kira, Storm, Fisti, and Tini!**

These dogs have been trained to help with the demining process since they were puppies. **Their keen sense of smell enables them to sniff out explosive devices, while their light weight and strict training keep them safe in these dangerous environments.** Trained by our partner, APOPO, which specializes in animal landmine detection, these dogs are on their first “work trip” to Senegal.

The conditions in Senegal are significantly different from the cold climates they are used to, so the dogs will need plenty of time to acclimate to the new environment and bond with their handlers before getting to work. **“We can’t wait for the dogs to arrive. They’re our new colleagues—that’s what we’re calling them,”** says Elisabeth Sambou, a deminer and community liaison officer at Humanity & Inclusion. HI’s demining projects are expected to clear nearly 200 acres of land in Senegal by 2025.

When the work begins, the dogs will be at it for three- to four-hour shifts, each inspecting over 200 square meters of land each day. Once they catch a suspicious odor, they sit (at least one meter away) and point their nose toward the source. That’s when the human deminers arrive to inspect the area and identify the object that their four-legged coworkers flagged.

“These four dogs are very powerful and highly motivated,” says handler Enrique Arevalo. **“They make a perfect team for demining. But they’re also very gentle, so you have to speak gently.** When they aren’t working, the pups love exercising, swimming, and playing with their favorite toys. **Thank you for helping Kira, Storm, Fisti, and Tini restore safety for communities in the Ziguinchor and Sédhiou regions. We’re so proud of our friendly, furry friends!**



Handler Basher Issa Al-Majali and Storm training to detect explosive devices.



Scan to see our new coworkers in action!



Élisabeth Léna Ndeye Sambou
Community Liaison & Deminer, HI Senegal

October 9, 1992, remains etched in the memories of all the residents of Bissine: on that day, the village was the scene of terrible violence. The village was bombed, houses were burned down, villagers were killed—and people were forced to leave quickly, leaving behind their lives and their roots. **It was 30 years before the first families dared to go home. Even then, it wasn't safe.**

People should feel comfortable at home; they should feel free. But in communities like Bissine, contaminated with landmines and other explosive remnants of war, there is fear and disruption. Farmers can’t access their land. Children can’t walk to school. People can’t retrieve water.

I joined Humanity & Inclusion’s demining team in Senegal in 2007. When I first started, I worked as a deminer. I was the only woman to attend my training in Ghana, and since then, I’ve worked my way up from non-technical surveys to explosive ordnance disposal to operating heavy machinery. Now, **I’m a Community Liaison Agent. When our teams arrived in Bissine in 2022, I worked closely with the village chief to ensure the safety of the community and our demining team.**

Many people know the dangers of mines, but they don’t know what demining is. Before our specialists arrive, we meet with communities to explain the process: the people they’ll meet, the equipment they’ll see, the noises they’ll hear. When an area is cleared of mines, we show the community it’s safe. Sometimes we’ll organize a soccer match in a once-contaminated area, showing residents that they can be confident to move freely.

Mine clearance is a source of pride for me. It’s the best job. I love meeting the communities; they motivate me. When deminers clear public spaces, walking paths and roads, it’s like removing a thorn from the community’s side. Every time you or someone on your team removes a mine, you draw strength from that. **The work can be tough, but when you do things with love, you don’t feel the weight of it.**

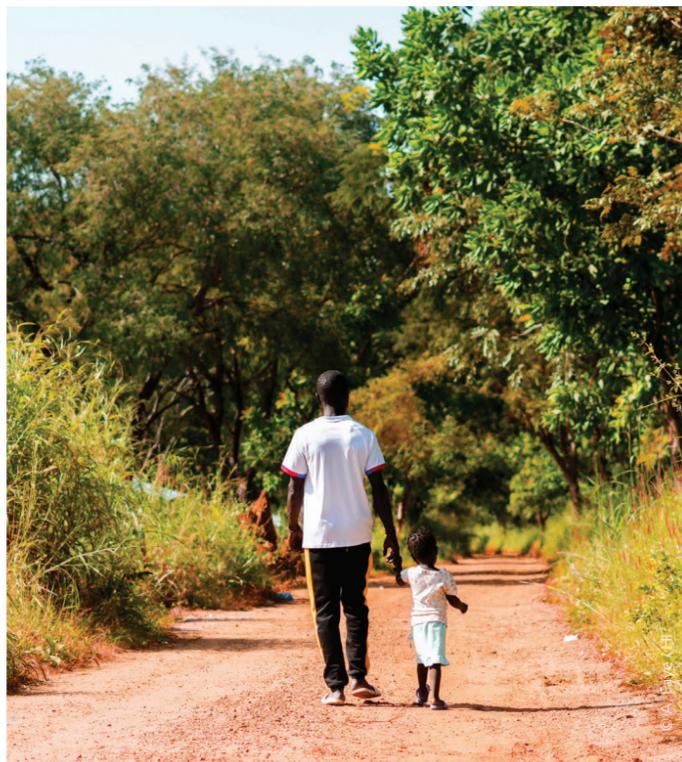


Ismaila Manga, Bissine village chief, and Elisabeth Sambou, from HI.



Famara Sané, born and raised in Bissine, now owns his own shop there.

COMING HOME LAND FREE FROM MINES & FULL OF HOPE



A father and daughter walk along the road to Bissine school.

MICRO NEWS



PHILIPPINES

At least 1.4 million people have been affected and more than 411,000 have been forced to flee due to massive flooding in the south of the Philippines. HI’s teams are currently on the ground assisting communities affected by the floods. HI has already distributed nearly 600 emergency kits.

RWANDA

Jeannette Uwimana, a young woman with hearing loss who was elected Miss Rwanda Innovation 2022, is Humanity & Inclusion’s newest ambassador in Rwanda. HI and Jeannette will work together to defend diversity, value differences and promote inclusion for all.

HAITI

Located in the West Indies, Haiti is an island that enjoys exceptional sunshine throughout the year. To take advantage of this climate, HI has decided to install solar panels on its buildings to increase energy self-sufficiency and reduce its carbon footprint.

Running for a meaningful cause

NYC Marathoners raise funds for inclusive aid

Humanity & Inclusion has been a charity partner of the TCS New York City Marathon since 2022. That first year, three people ran the marathon and raised funds to support inclusive aid in 60 countries: Nick Cooper, Lauren Oliva and Tony Searing (who also graciously serves as the Vice President of our Board).

Our team increased to five in 2023: John Block, Sophie Bysiewicz, Beth Rothschild, Nachama Stern and Lynne Simone. **Each runner rallied their family and friends to raise \$4,000—totaling more than \$20,000—to support people with disabilities in times of peace, conflict and disaster. Wow! Talk about a superstar team!**

Lynne and Sophie recently took the time to reflect on their experience and why they chose to run for HI.

Lynne Simone came to us with countless 5Ks under her belt but was a newbie to distance running. Accepting a challenge from a friend, Lynne applied to join HI's marathon team.

"HI took a chance on a middle-aged woman training in Florida for a New York race who had never completed a

marathon before," Lynne recalls. "We chatted about the importance of physical and mental therapies and we both knew I was a good fit."

Lynne has worked as both a tech and a therapist at a physical therapy outpatient clinic for years, "so the global rehabilitation work that HI does holds a special place in my heart."

Inspired by her father, Sophie Bysiewicz also joined our 2023 team.

"My father was always an avid runner and cyclist, and a year and a half ago, he was cycling when he was hit head-on by a drunk driver," Sophie explains. "He miraculously survived but had his left leg amputated and has many more injuries. His outlook on the adjustment to life with a disability has inspired me so much."

Sophie saw an opportunity to use the "privilege and platform of running the NYC Marathon to raise funds for people facing adversity, injuries and disabilities."

On November 3, we'll be in New York again with at least five runners representing Humanity & Inclusion! We'll be introducing the team soon, so be on the lookout for information about them and their fundraisers at hi-us.org and on our social media channels!



Lynne Simone smiles with her medal from the 2023 NYC Marathon.

YOUR IMPACT IN UKRAINE



A woman participates in a mobility session with an HI physical therapist.



Pavlo, 39, receives a hygiene kit from HI's Basic Needs distribution team.



HI staff lead Mine & IED awareness sessions for civilians near the frontline.

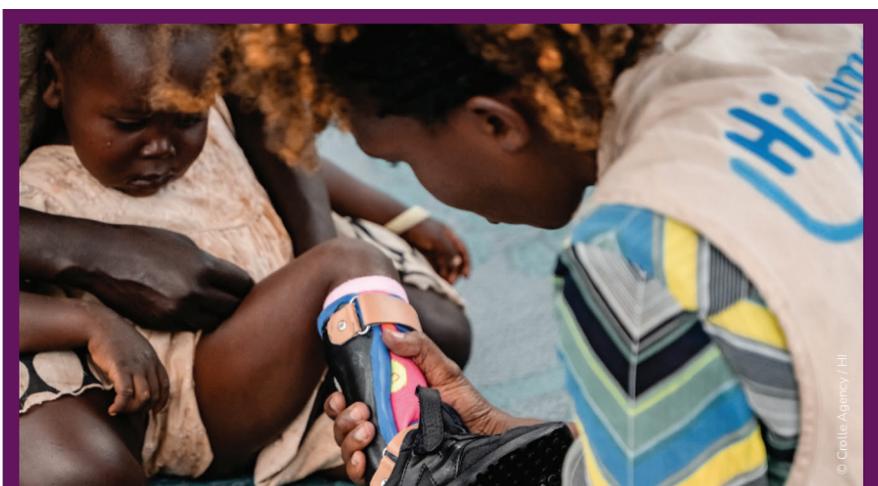
Ukrainians forge on after two years of war

Two years since Russia invaded Ukraine, countless lives have been lost and upended. Homes, roads, hospitals and schools are destroyed. Communities are cut off from the rest of the world by explosive weapons contamination. Physical and psychological health is deteriorating. Yet thanks to your support, Ukrainians are accessing critical aid.

Right now, Humanity & Inclusion's teams are working in shelters and communities across Ukraine, distributing hygiene and dignity kits, offering physical therapy to people with disabilities and injuries, leading mental health support sessions and teaching people how to stay safe in areas contaminated by explosive remnants of war.

HI's specialists have not forgotten the crisis in Ukraine. Thanks to you, we've been there for the last two years, and with your continued support, we'll be there as long as we're needed.

YOUR PLANNED GIFTS CAN TRANSFORM FUTURES FOREVER



Join the First Responder giving community!



With local teams in 60 countries, Humanity & Inclusion is always there for people with disabilities in times of peace, conflict and disaster. You can be there, too, by joining our *First Responder* monthly giving community.

Scan to start your monthly gift!



Are you or someone you know 70 1/2 or older?

You might be eligible to dedicate a portion of your IRA to make a difference with Humanity & Inclusion. IRA gifts make an immediate impact in the communities we serve. And, they often come with tax benefits—including helping you meet a Required Minimum Distribution for 2024. Consider a Qualified Charitable Distribution today!



Scan to send your tax-smart IRA gift today!