

GLOBAL AID CUTS 2025 REPORT

JESUIT REFUGEE SERVICE



JRS South Sudan

AN EROSION OF SOLIDARITY

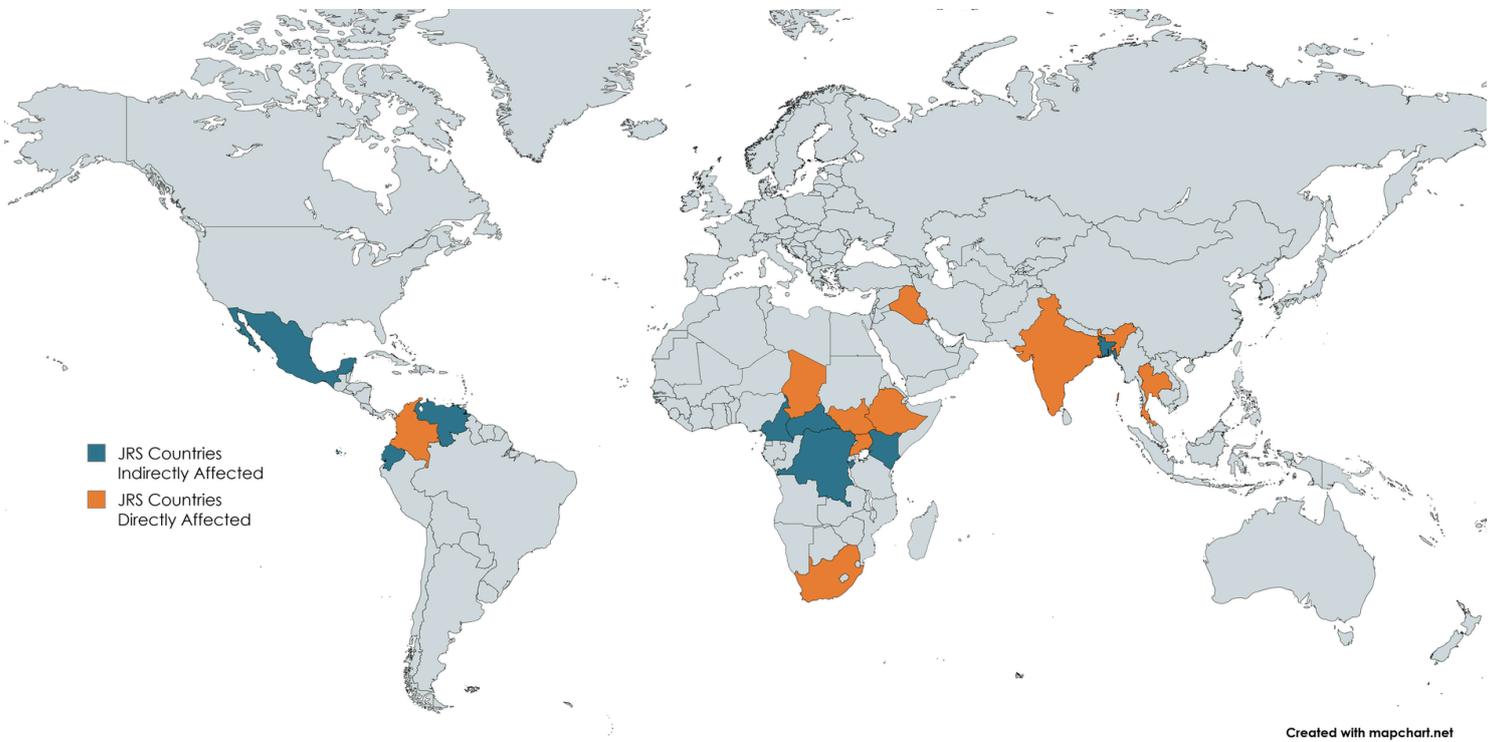
On 24 January 2025, the US State Department issued a stop-work order for existing grants and contracts administering humanitarian aid — funds that had already been awarded and were being implemented. The order directly and instantly affected nine JRS Country Offices: South Africa, Ethiopia, Uganda, South Sudan, Chad, Thailand, Colombia, India, Iraq.

Many other governments followed suit, making an active choice to dismantle a support network that served some of the most vulnerable communities around the world. The effects were immediate and devastating.

Throughout 2025, partner organisations, including UN agencies, were forced to cut projects or limit their collaborations. As a result, the people who relied on these services came knocking at the door of the few actors still present. Today, what little funding remains hangs on a knife edge. Those we accompany are aware that they might lose their lifelines from one day to the next, leading to increased stress and significant protection concerns.

JRS has witnessed first-hand the effects of this deliberate erosion of solidarity. In addition to the nine countries directly impacted, we have seen knock-on effects across our programmes, and in particular in Burundi, Kenya, Ecuador, Mexico, Venezuela, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Bangladesh, and four regional offices. The main JRS project areas affected in 2025 were Education, MHPSS, General Protection and Health, with a huge impact on staff salaries and operational costs. Many of our staff are locally hired, meaning that these cuts create an additional burden on host communities, driving unemployment.

One year after the cuts were first announced, the outlook remains bleak. For millions of vulnerable people, representation and access to life-saving services have been severely compromised. Before the cuts, the funding available to provide sustained, dignified support did not come close to meeting the growing needs of people displaced by conflict, economic collapse and climate breakdown. Today, the situation is catastrophic.



6 regions where JRS programmes were directly affected.

100,000 displaced people assisted by JRS directly affected by initial suspension.

\$18 million in US funding affected for 2025.

JRS RESPONSE

“Our task at JRS is not to pretend we have all the answers. It is to stay present. To live in solidarity. To recognise one another as brothers and sisters.”

Br Michael Schöpf - JRS International Director

When the US cuts were first announced, JRS immediately set up a dedicated taskforce, comprising staff from different departments, programmatic areas and Jesuit networks, to coordinate and oversee mitigation efforts across all impacted offices. Together, we worked to revise project plans and anticipate future disruptions, based on the specific context of each programme and on the core needs of the most vulnerable populations we serve. Thanks to the generous response of our partners around the world to our Global Appeal, which raised almost \$4M, we were able to meet these needs as swiftly as possible.

This focus on regular planning and coordinated response sets our course for the years ahead. Under these difficult circumstances, the work that we do will only be possible if able to take clear, informed decisions and respond daily to the most urgent needs. And it is only possible if you, our friends and supporters, continue to accompany us on this journey.



SPOTLIGHT ON: RESTRUCTURING



JRS Colombia

Last year, **JRS Colombia** marked its 30th anniversary. Over the previous decade, it had grown to be one of JRS's largest country operations, running 14 legal, psychosocial, and emergency assistance projects in different locations. Funding from the US made up 67% of the annual budget for these programmes, with significant unrestricted funding allowing for flexibility and sustainability.

After the funding cuts hit, **JRS was forced to close eight of 14 local offices in the country, and to reduce the size of operations by 65%**. Having to tell over 100 collaborators not to come into work the next day was incredibly painful, particularly at a time when the humanitarian sector at large had been thrown into crisis. And, of course, the impact on those we serve cannot be overstated: we had planned to accompany around 30,500 people in 14 locations. Instead, we understood that we would be able to assist fewer than 10,000 people in only six territories. This despite being aware of the vulnerability and urgent, ongoing needs of the communities we serve.

In the midst of these challenges, **JRS Country Director Ximena Vidal sees hope for the future:**

"At the end of August 2025, JRS Colombia was able to restart implementation under new conditions. We took the opportunity to serve displaced communities as best we could, in the knowledge that it might be the last time we would be able to reach people in need on such a large scale.

Now is when the presence of JRS in Colombia makes the most sense, and we understand that even though we won't have the financial resources that we had in recent years, it is always possible to continue bringing hope to those who need it so much. We have been very fortunate to count on the support of so many people who believe in keeping alive this mission."

SPOTLIGHT ON: MENTAL HEALTH



In **South Sudan**, drastic cuts to humanitarian aid have reduced or even eliminated life-saving mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services, further straining an already fragile system heavily reliant on humanitarian actors.

Harmful coping mechanisms have increased, especially among young people, alongside rising levels of psychological distress and a worrying escalation in suicide attempts. Many people who once found stability through integrated psychosocial programming are now struggling, with some experiencing relapses or a worsening of their symptoms. Families with children with special needs who depended on MHPSS services have been severely affected. Some children have died.

In response to this crisis, **JRS has continued to strengthen its community-based approach to MHPSS**. This has been crucial in keeping services going, even if on a smaller scale. The idea is simple: communities themselves are the foremost experts in their own wellbeing. They are the first to respond, drawing on their knowledge of local resources, culture, and coping strategies.

“The biggest challenge is now. I have seen many organisations close or drastically reduce their staff. This puts more weight on our shoulders. As counsellors, we receive questions both from newly arrived people and from those already in the camp, and we must find answers.

People need MHPSS. Some arrive here, in the camps or the reception centres thinking their life is over. But if they understand the other communities, if they are guided towards an inter-community vision, they can support each other. They can become like a big family. This gives them the strength to start over and become self-reliant. To continue caring for their children and to look for work.”

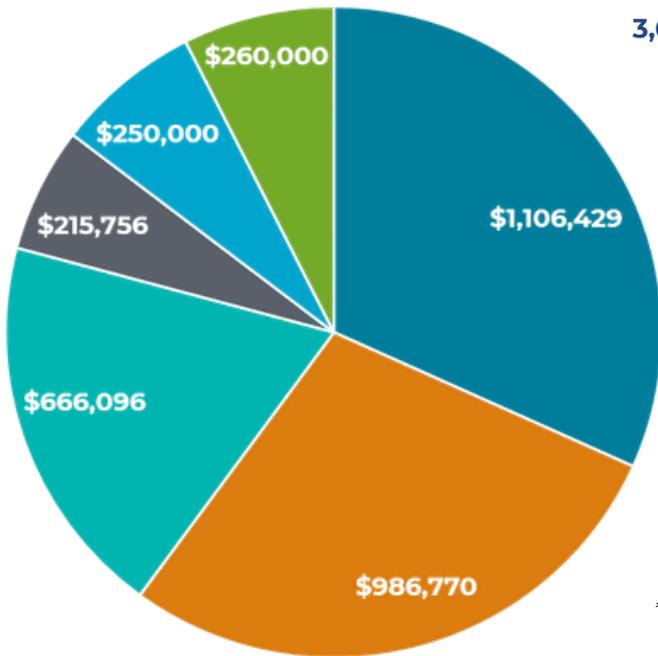
Alamedin Abdulrahman, Sudanese refugee and JRS home visitor in **South Sudan**

JRS LOOKING AHEAD

We were deeply moved by the outpouring of solidarity we witnessed from our supporters last year. When we called, you answered. Your generosity goes well beyond the gesture itself: it enables a child in Chad to go back to school, a mother in South Sudan to access mental health support, a refugee in Colombia fleeing war to understand their legal rights. Below, you will find information on how your generous contributions were disbursed to our programmes.

As the needs of those we assist grow, we call on you to continue walking with us and with the people we serve. Your support and generosity allow us remain present where suffering is greatest and hope is most fragile. Together, we can continue to protect life and restore dignity to those who have been forced to flee.

Thank you for walking with displaced people at a time of dire need.



3,656,365 USD disbursed so far from the Global Appeal*

- To projects in the JRS West Africa Region (Chad, Cameroon, Central African Republic, DRC, Nigeria)
- To projects in the JRS East & South Africa Region (Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa, South Sudan, Uganda)
- To projects in the JRS Latin American Region (Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Venezuela)
- To projects in the JRS Middle East & North Africa Region (Iraq)
- To projects in the JRS South Asia Region (Bangladesh, India)
- To projects in the JRS Asia Pacific Region (Thailand)

**Total includes indirect costs and strategic planning costs for 2026*

