



HUNGARIAN
INTERCHURCH AID

FROM EMERGENCY RESPONSE TO INTEGRATION

35 Years of Work with Refugees
& Displaced Communities



About us

Hungarian Interchurch Aid (HIA) is a community working together to provide effective assistance to people in need and those affected by crises worldwide. Founded in 1991, it has become one of Hungary's largest and most internationally recognized charity organizations. Building on our experience in humanitarian response, development cooperation, and social work, we operate both in Hungary and across the world, supporting vulnerable communities and strengthening resilience. What began as a church initiative has grown into a strong international network of professionals, volunteers, donors, and responsible corporate partners, united by the mission to help those in need.



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actalliance

We are proud members of **ACT Alliance**, one of the largest global faith-based humanitarian networks, and we are also a partner organization of **ECHO**. In addition, our work is supported through close cooperation with **United Nations agencies**, including the World Food Programme, the UNHCR and the Ukrainian Humanitarian Fund. We also maintain a strategic partnership with the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary**, which plays a key role in strengthening our international engagement and humanitarian efforts. These strong and diverse partnerships form the backbone of our international activities, enabling us to respond effectively to crises and to support vulnerable communities worldwide

Over the course of three decades, the refugee and humanitarian work of the Hungarian Interchurch Aid has evolved into an integrated humanitarian system built on multiple areas of expertise.

Basic assistance, livelihood support, education, protection, and psychosocial services reinforce one another within a professional framework that enables both rapid emergency response and long-term presence. This consistent institutional development made it possible for the organization to emerge as a credible, effective, and internationally recognized actor during the protracted crises following 2014, and later during the humanitarian emergency caused by the war in Ukraine from 2022 onwards.

Our Objectives

Fighting poverty



Fostering resilience and solidarity



Assisting those in need



35 years of Service

Since its establishment in 1991, HIA has been involved in supporting people forced to flee because of armed conflicts, persecution, natural disasters and humanitarian crises. Over more than three decades, the organization has evolved from an emergency relief actor responding to regional refugee movements into one of Hungary's leading humanitarian and development organizations with large-scale international operations.

From the refugee flows linked to the collapse of the Eastern Bloc and the Yugoslav wars in the early 1990s to the mass displacement crises caused by the war in Ukraine, the Syrian conflict, instability in Iraq and Afghanistan, and climate-related emergencies in

Africa and Asia, HIA has continuously adapted its interventions to changing humanitarian realities. The organization's work has consistently focused on displaced populations: refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees and vulnerable host communities. Beyond life-saving humanitarian assistance, HIA has increasingly concentrated on long-term recovery, protection, psychosocial support, community resilience and livelihood restoration.



1991

1993



The first years of Hungarian Interchurch Aid coincided with a period of profound geopolitical transformation in Central and Eastern Europe. Political instability, armed conflict and state collapse generated major refugee flows throughout the region. Already in the early 1990s, HIA became actively involved in supporting refugees arriving in Hungary from East Germany and later from the territories affected by the Yugoslav wars.

Early Refugee Response & Humanitarian Engagement (1990s)

RESPONDING TO THE REFUGEE CRISES OF POST-COLD WAR EUROPE

One of the organization's earliest flagship interventions was the operation of the Temporary Reception Home for Refugees in Erőspusztá. The 100-capacity facility hosted Bosnian and Croatian refugees, while asylum seekers from Iraq, Rwanda and Afghanistan also received support. The organization simultaneously developed professional legal and social support services through its Office of Immigration and Refugee Affairs

in Budapest. Refugees, asylum seekers, migrants and foreign workers received counselling on asylum and residence procedures, access to healthcare, employment-related issues, family law matters and social integration. As migration pressures increased, HIA became one of the key humanitarian actors in Hungary's refugee reception system.

The Balkan Wars and Long-Term Regional Response

REFUGEES, DISPLACEMENT & HUMANITARIAN SUPPORT IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

The Yugoslav wars created one of Europe's largest displacement crises after the Second World War. Millions of people were forced to flee their homes across Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo and Serbia.

Hungarian Interchurch Aid developed its humanitarian presence throughout the region, combining emergency assistance with long-term social stabilization programmes.

Main areas of intervention included:

- Sandžak (Serbia)
- Vojvodina
- Kosovo

Nagyharsány refugee camp



Initially, the organization focused on supporting refugees and internally displaced persons affected by the Yugoslav wars through food aid, hygiene assistance, winter fuel support, soup kitchens and basic healthcare assistance. Over time, HIA gradually shifted toward longer-term resilience-building and livelihood programmes.

1992



Community soup kitchens



Local economic development



Youth work & prevention



Vocational trainings



Agricultural self-reliance

Activities

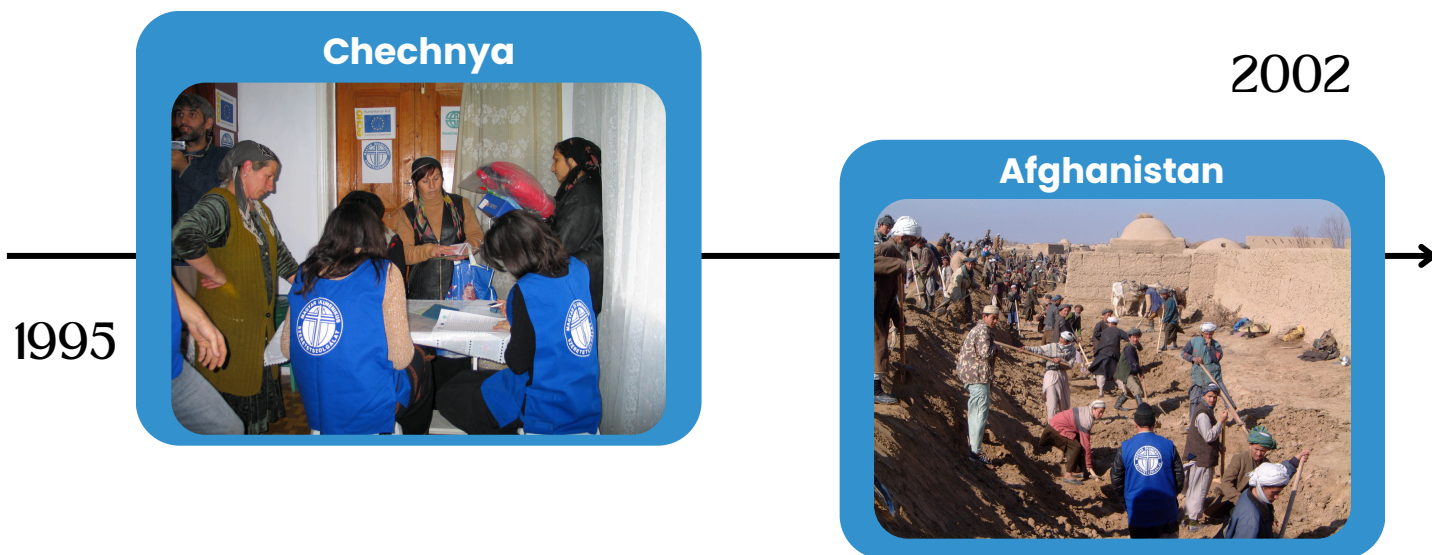
Nagyharsány refugee camp



The North Caucasus and Chechen Displacement

SUPPORTING REFUGEES DURING THE CHECHEN WARS

From the mid-1990s onward, HIA maintained a continuous humanitarian presence in the North Caucasus for more than a decade. The conflicts in Chechnya generated massive displacement into neighbouring republics and regions, particularly Dagestan, North Ossetia and Stavropol. The regional response gradually evolved from emergency humanitarian aid toward development-oriented recovery and self-reliance programmes.



Afghanistan - Displacement, Return & Long-term Recovery

SUPPORTING REFUGEES, RETURNEES AND VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

Afghanistan became one of HIA's most important international operational areas from the early 2000s. Decades of conflict, forced migration, natural disasters and mass returns created complex humanitarian and development challenges.

Main target groups included:

- Returnee families
- Internally displaced persons
- Refugee communities
- Women-headed households
- Orphans
- Persons with disabilities.

Iraq – From Emergency to Community Stabilization

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE AFTER 2003 & THE RISE OF ISIS

The Iraq response illustrates HIA's transition from emergency relief toward comprehensive resilience-building and community stabilization. Operating in Iraq since 2003, the scale of activities expanded significantly after 2014, when the Islamic State crisis triggered mass displacement across the country.



Dohuk

2014

2017

2023



Ankawa



Alqosh

Activities

- NFI Emergency relief
- Hygiene assistance
- Shelter support
- Emergency food

Interventions

- Infrastructure rehabilitation
- Vocational trainings
- Agricultural development
- Small business support

Main target groups included:

- Internally displaced persons
- Syrian refugees
- Christian & Yazidi minorities & returnees
- Vulnerable host populations

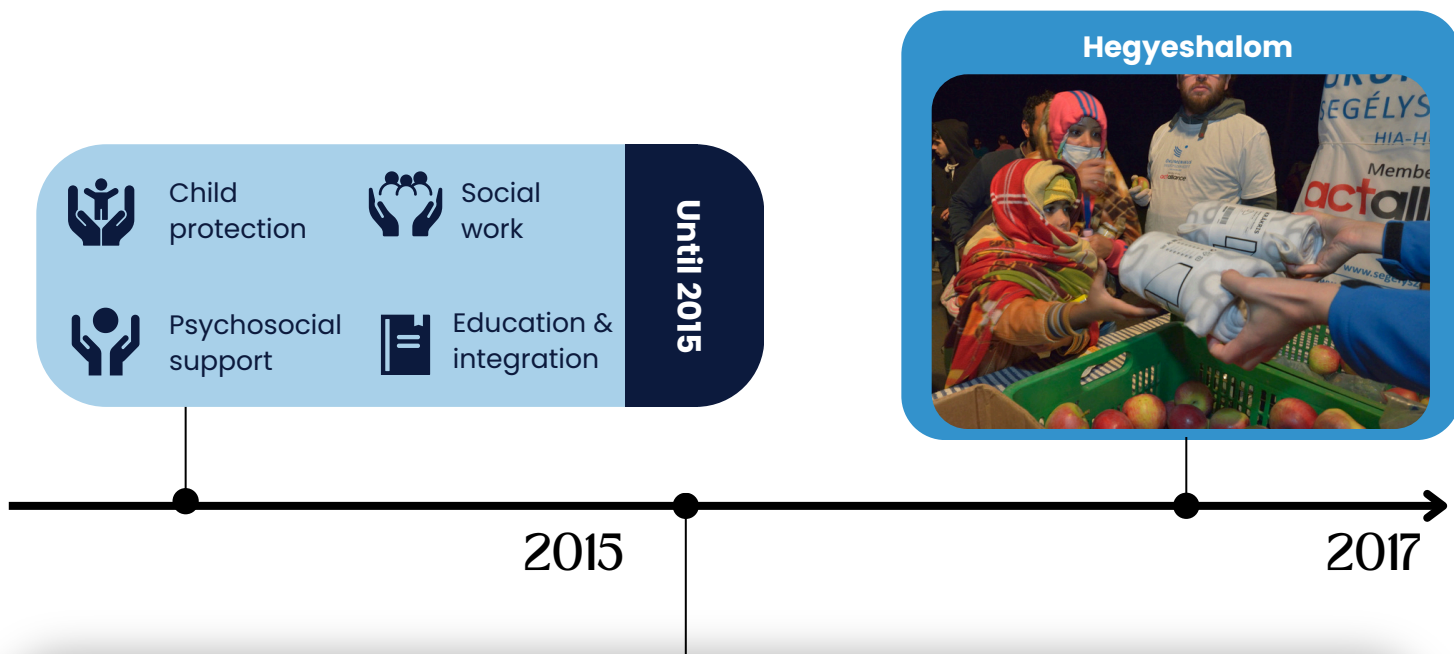
The organization also placed strong emphasis on long-term stabilization through school rehabilitation; vocational training; agricultural development;

support for small businesses; women's entrepreneurship. Programmes reached tens of thousands of people annually. HIA implemented major infrastructure rehabilitation programmes, and placed strong emphasis on long-term stabilization through its development programs. Hundreds of businesses and farms received support, furthermore vocational training programmes achieved employment rates of approximately 75%.

Refugee Support & Migration Response in Hungary

UNACCOMPANIED MINORS & REFUGEE RECEPTION

From the late 2000s until the mid-2010s, HIA became one of the most important actors in Hungary's support system for unaccompanied minor asylum seekers. However, the migration crisis of 2015–2017 represented one of the largest humanitarian operations in the organization's domestic history. The response demonstrated HIA's ability to rapidly adapt to changing migration routes and operate large-scale humanitarian logistics across multiple countries simultaneously.



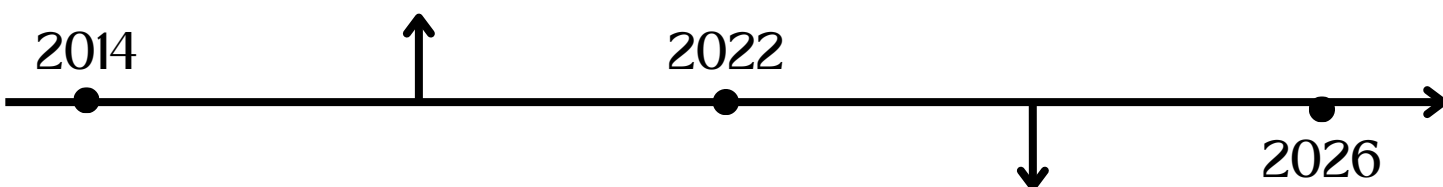
Ukraine - The Largest Humanitarian Response of HIA

FROM CRISIS TO LASTING CHANGE

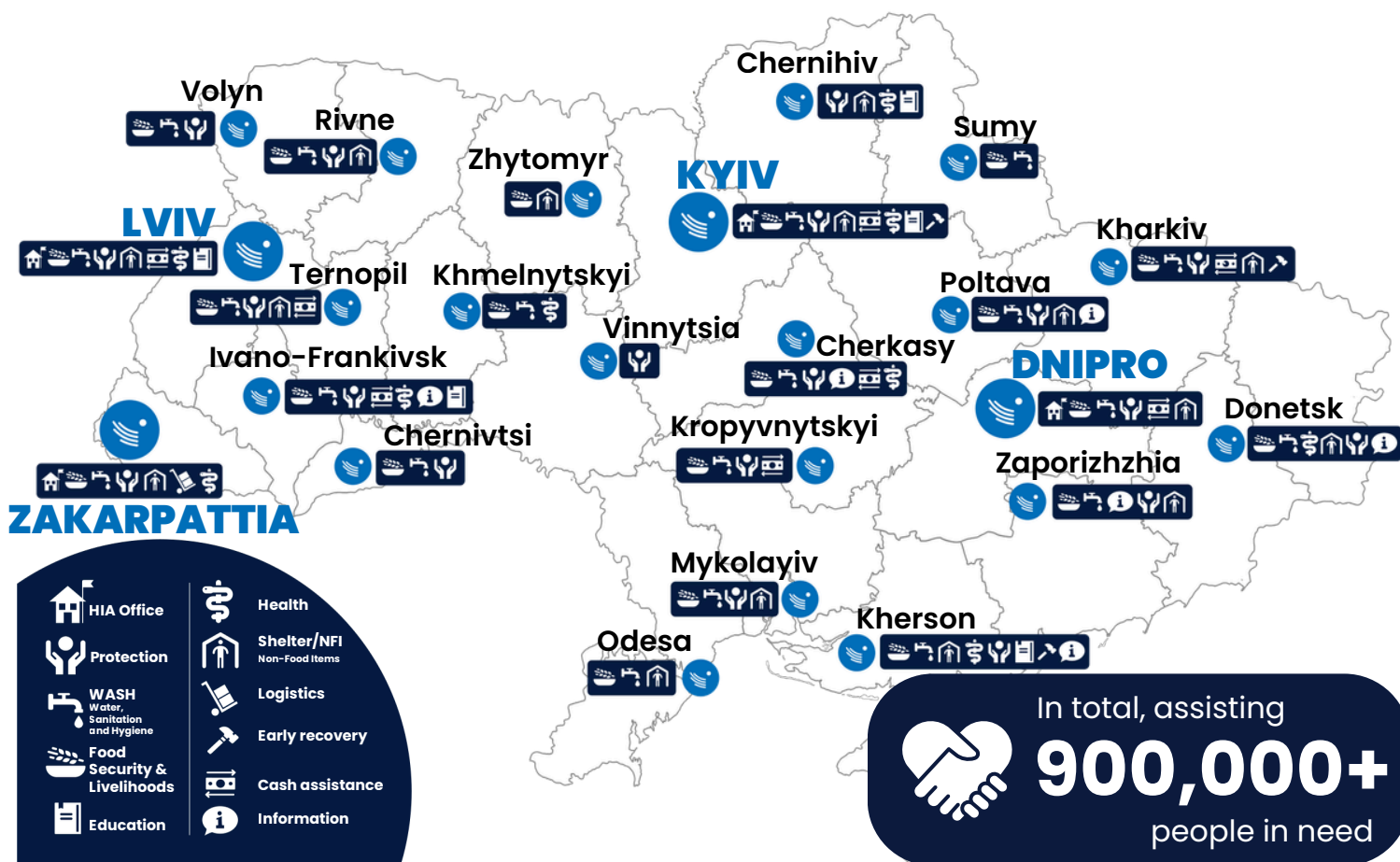
With a presence in Ukraine since 1998, HIA established nationwide operations in 2014 and doubled down on its efforts after February 2022. Delivering in-kind aid, cash assistance, community-based relief, and protection across 23 oblasts, HIA often reaches hard-to-access areas to support those most affected by the war.

When the Russian-Ukrainian conflict first escalated in 2014, HIA was the only member of the ACT Alliance already operating in Ukraine. As a leading actor, HIA provided vital support to internally displaced persons across 20 oblasts and 543 settlements, directly assisting **more than 578,000 people**. Beyond distributing essential food, hygiene, and household items, HIA also renovated community shelters for displaced families, delivered hundreds of tons of heating fuel to vulnerable households, and offered psychosocial support

Following the outbreak of the war in Ukraine in February 2022, HIA launched the largest humanitarian operation of its history. As the crisis evolved, HIA expanded its work from emergency relief to long-term recovery and resilience building. Inside Ukraine, HIA focused on rehabilitating schools, hospitals, and community infrastructure, helping displaced families return home and rebuild their lives. By combining humanitarian aid with reconstruction and livelihood programmes, HIA continues to stand with those affected by the war.



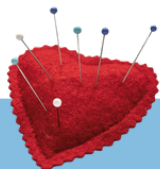
HIA IN UKRAINE 2022-2026



Support for Ukrainian Refugees in Hungary

ESTABLISHING A NATIONWIDE REFUGEE SUPPORT SYSTEM

The refugee response in Hungary demonstrates the organization's integrated approach, combining humanitarian protection, social inclusion and long-term integration support. Following the outbreak of the war in Ukraine in 2022, HIA rapidly established a nationwide refugee support network in Hungary. The central institution of this response became the Support Centre for Ukrainian Refugees (UMTK) in Budapest. Opened in July 2022, the Centre provides integrated support ranging from emergency assistance to long-term social integration.



HIA also launched crisis support for Ukrainian-speaking survivors of violence, medium- and long-term housing programmes, cooperation frameworks with municipalities, churches and civil society actors.

Summer camp for children



2022

2026

2023

2024

Establishment of the Support Centre



Voucher distribution



Food & hygiene support



Clothing & household items



Legal aid



Mental health & psychosocial assistance



Medicine assistance



Multi-purpose cash & vouchers



Administrative & integration support



Social work

Activities

Ethiopia – Displacement, Drought and Climate Resilience

ESTABLISHING A NATIONWIDE REFUGEE SUPPORT SYSTEM

HIA's Ethiopia response demonstrates the increasing overlap between displacement, climate shocks and long-term humanitarian needs. Since 2021, HIA has maintained a continuous humanitarian presence in Ethiopia focusing on assisting internally displaced persons, vulnerable host communities and populations affected by conflict and drought.

Activities

- Vocational trainings
- Water, sanitation & hygiene
- Resilience-building
- Drought-resistant agriculture
- Emergency food
- Livestock distribution

Supporting **43** thousand people in need

Gambela



Oromia, West Guji Zone



2021

2024

2022

2025

Gambela



Oromia, West Guji Zone



Responding to Natural Disasters & Displacement Worldwide

HUMANITARIAN ACTION BEYOND CONFLICT SETTINGS

The organization's interventions combined emergency relief with reconstruction, livelihood restoration and community resilience programmes. In addition to conflict-related displacement crises, HIA has regularly responded to natural disasters – such as floods, earthquakes, tsunamis, typhoons, drought and other climate emergencies worldwide. HIA aims to alleviate the challenges of people living in temporary displacement by ensuring access to essential services and support, while facilitating safe, voluntary, and timely return to their homes whenever conditions allow. HIA's interventions frequently addressed emergency displacement, destruction of homes and infrastructure, loss of livelihoods and long-term recovery needs.

Haiti, Earthquake



Afghanistan, Earthquake



Sri Lanka, Tsunami



Romania, Flash floods



1999

2004

2010

2014

2023

2025

Ukraine / Hungary, Tisza flood



Türkiye, Earthquake





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www.hia.hu/en

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