



مجلس كنائس الشرق الأوسط

The Middle East Council of Churches

DIAKONIA DEPARTMENT - SERVICE IN DIGNITY

Rescue Syria Update - 6

February 14th 2023



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The Middle East Council of Churches

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From the depth of suffering

Syria... the wound of time, which whenever it began to heal, fate returned to it with a new catastrophe that reopens it and causes it to bleed again.

Suddenly and without warning, the people of Syria woke up, on a February 6, at four in the morning, to an earthquake, which resulted in massive destructions in Aleppo, Lattakia, Hama, Idlib, Jableh as well in different other areas of the country.

In a moment everything changed, buildings and houses collapsed... The earth and what was on it shook, and days started to be filled with sorrow and groaning, resembling the harsh days of the war, with the cries of hearts eroding with pain and the flames of loss and its agony.

This earthquake caused a great humanitarian catastrophe by all standards, with great material and human losses, and just as the war completely changed the lives of Syrians, this earthquake changed their lives again, but with a different amplitude.

As the suffering of these people, who became accustomed to snow, cold, poverty, oppression, sanctions, hunger, diseases and epidemics, increased, whoever got out alive from under the rubble, and whoever escaped from death, re-experience displacement, and returned again to the shelters, whose harsh experience was hardly erased from his mind.

However, despite all this pain, there was a ray of light that illuminated the darkness of the people in the areas affected by the earthquake disaster, as Churches and humanitarian organizations rushed to support the people who are already tired of the scourge of war. For there are those who still remember that something...in this world is called Syria.

OVERVIEW OF DEVELOPMENTS

On 12 February, the Syrian Ministry of Health reported 1,414 deaths and 2,349 injuries as a result of the earthquake, mainly in Aleppo, Lattakia, Hama, south Idlib and Tartous Governorates. The number of casualties is expected to rise as search and rescue operations continue.

Over 6 million people are affected by the earthquake in the affected areas. This includes communities in the most affected Governorates of Aleppo (2 million people), Hama (1.3 million), Lattakia (1.2 million), Homs (963,000), Tartous (521,000) and southern Idlib (27,000)

There are reports of affected families being displaced from Aleppo and Lattakia to Tartous, Hama and other less-affected Governorates in the south. This number is expected to increase in the coming days. Meanwhile, thousands of families remain without shelter in open areas or are seeking refuge in damaged buildings, reception centers, collective centers, or are being temporarily hosted by other families.



01 Aleppo Governorate

Statistics show that an estimated number of 4.2 million people in Aleppo have been affected to varying degrees.¹ Moreover, the number of collective shelters has increased to 235, hosting over 104,000 individuals, including some 62,400 children and 29,100 women. In total 183,000 people are estimated to be displaced from their homes.² As of 14 February, 56 buildings reportedly collapsed, while an unspecified number of buildings in other affected locations also show damages to varying degrees.³ Out of 31 supported community centers in Aleppo, 18 are functional as of 12 February. Out of the 13 centers that are currently not operational, nine have been assessed as damaged.



02 HOMS AND HAMA

According to information as of 12 February, three collective shelters (one in rural Hama and two in Hama city) were hosting a total of 56 families (237 individuals). SARC reported that two other collective shelters were opened by the Governorate. Around 140 families (429 individuals) reportedly arrived in Homs Governorate out of which 272 individuals (101 families) are from Aleppo Governorate, 129 individuals (32 families) from Latakia, and 28 individuals (7 families) from Hama. Some of these families are reportedly staying in a shelter in Homs city.

03 Tartous and Lattakia Governorates

People affected by the earthquake continue to arrive to Tartous Governorate mostly from Aleppo and Latakia. So far, 318 families have arrived to Tartous from Aleppo, Latakia, and Hama Governorates. 213 families displaced from Latakia city and Jableh to rural areas of Latakia Governorate. The main identified needs are food, CRIs, clothing, hygiene kits, protection services and medicines. There is an increase in the number of people requiring psychosocial support, especially among children.

04 Southern Governorates

The southern governorates witnessed an arrival of families displaced from the most affected Governorates that around 22 families arrived in Dar'a Governorate and 24 in Al Soueida Governorate. Most of the families came from Aleppo and Latakia and are being hosted by relatives or the host community.⁴

[1] <https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/flash-appeal-syrian-arab-republic-earthquake-february-may-2023>

[2] <https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/unhcr-syria-emergency-response-earthquake-flash-update-7-13-february-2023>

[3] <https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/flash-appeal-syrian-arab-republic-earthquake-february-may-2023>

[4] UNHCR, 12 Feb

Updates on MECC Interventions & response preparation

On Monday February 13th, MECC has invited all head of members churches in Aleppo in order to discuss coordination mechanisms related to the structure of the action and the priority needs.

The Aleppo Church Leaders Committee (Aclc) agreed to establish an ecumenical Syria earthquake committee along with a technical-legal committee from specialized certified engineers and lawyers to deal with the safety of building structures affected by earthquake in coordination with MECC technical team. This committee will develop a database of beneficiaries which shall include families whose apartments are safe and only need repair, hence dividing the targeted fields into different sectors which will allow the beginning of the tendering process, then the implementation.

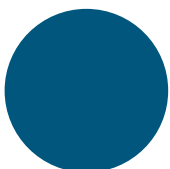
As for other lifesaving activities such as food and nonfood items or cash assistance, MECC will use the existing collected data and it will complete it through field surveys conducted by its team in order to avoid duplication in the relief activities. The distributions of in-kind aid like food and non-food items will be launched on Wednesday 15th of February by MECC in partnership with PLAN International by targeting some existing shelters.

Moreover, MECC is studying options of cash assistance through existing banks since many affected families are today in need of such quick assistance.

But since many organizations are supporting families with lifesaving items, MECC is looking to revise its priority interventions and to provide for needs that are not met by any of existing actors, such as schooling and job rehabilitation.

MECC shall be coordinating the work among different ad-hoc committees, emanating from the Aleppo Church Leaders Committee (Aclc) such as the Social Committee to-be, and to establish any needed committees in the future.

MECC urges its partners to support its endeavors which will bring happiness and smiles to sad faces, will heal broken spirits and helps restoring human dignity.



Video Reports :



1- Syria Is in Distress Due to the Earthquake that Hit It
Video - Safir Salim Describes the Situation in the Salesian Church in Aleppo



2- Moments of Terror Following the Earthquake that Struck Syria
Video - Georges Batikha Survives the Disaster and Highlights the Urgent Needs



3- Searching for Hope Following the Earthquake that Hit Syria
Video - Rogina Makhoul Describes the Fear of the Afflicted Families and Children



4- An Interview with His Eminence Ephraim Maaloui, Greek Orthodox Metropolitan of Aleppo, Alexandretta and Dependencies, after the Earthquake that Struck Syria