



مجلس كنائس الشرق الأوسط

The Middle East Council of Churches

## DIAKONIA DEPARTMENT- SERVICE IN DIGNITY

Rescue Syria Update - 9

March 2<sup>nd</sup> 2023



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The Middle East Council of Churches

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"In his name the nations will put their hope" (Matthew 12:21)



## *Living by hope that does not disappoint*

*I arrived to Aleppo with fears and hopes... I was thinking on the road, what shall I see? in which tones should I talk to people after what they have gone through?? What message should I carry as a person coming from a safe place and being loaded with promises to offer help ??*

*I arrived to sunny Aleppo, life seemed to be normal as people were moving and walking, crowding here and there. Several people were displaying their products in the street trying to sell them to feed their families at the end of the day. But this atmosphere was not like what I used to see when I visited Aleppo before, I felt as if there was a misty cloud that dominated all with the shadow of anxiety and sadness. On our way to our lodging, we witnessed the impact of the earthquake, a few demolished buildings here and there, some people trying to clean the rubbles, others removing the stones near their shops. Aleppo which suffered a lot during the war is trying to survive again with the determination of its people to make life continue in spite of hardship living conditions. The fear of tomorrow makes life difficult for many households who struggle to secure a safe life for their children and a lot of sadness and anxiety appear on all faces I saw. But in spite of such a gloomy picture, I was very impressed to see brave youth working with great hearts and spirit as well as with full trust and dedication to find ways to preserve their presence and witness to their faith and mission. My anxiety turned into joy when I sat with those who are working in relief in Aleppo and learned that life teaches us many lessons on how to turn challenges into better opportunities.*



## 01 Updated Key figures:

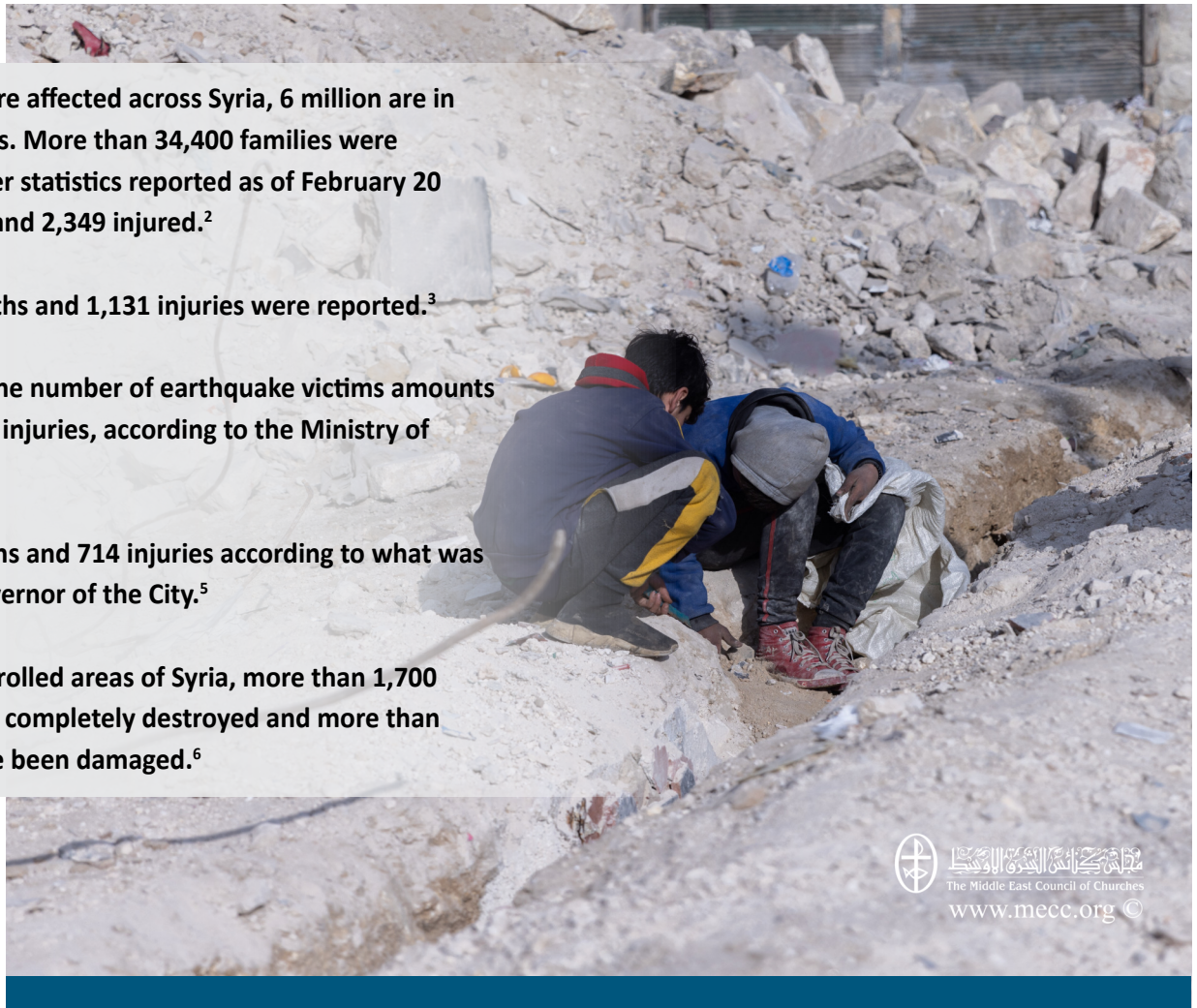
8.8 million people are affected across Syria, 6 million are in GoS-controlled areas. More than 34,400 families were displaced.<sup>1</sup> Moreover statistics reported as of February 20 show 1,414 deaths and 2,349 injured.<sup>2</sup>

In Lattakia, 805 deaths and 1,131 injuries were reported.<sup>3</sup>

In Hama province, the number of earthquake victims amounts to 49 deaths and 67 injuries, according to the Ministry of Health.<sup>4</sup>

In Aleppo, 432 deaths and 714 injuries according to what was reported by the Governor of the City.<sup>5</sup>

In government-controlled areas of Syria, more than 1,700 buildings have been completely destroyed and more than 7,200 buildings have been damaged.<sup>6</sup>



## 02 Displacement

A total number of 34,400 families were displaced .A total of 280 affected families (1,090 individuals) were identified in Homs. Of these, approximately 270 families arrived from Aleppo, Latakia and Hama and have been accommodated by the local community in Homs city and rural Homs.

Additionally, 1,140 displaced families were identified outside collective shelters mostly from Aleppo, Hama, and Lattakia.<sup>8</sup>

In Latakia 172,000 people were displaced. Most of them are staying with host communities.<sup>9</sup>

[1] Syria Earthquake February 2023 Government-controlled areas, Bi-Weekly Highlights - 24/02/2023

[2] MoH, Facebook, 20 Feb

[3] SANA, 14 Feb

[4] SANA, 07 Feb

[5] Npasyria, 23 Feb

[6] UNDP, 19 Feb, ERL, 20 Feb

[7] ERL, 20 Feb

[8] UNHCR, 17 Feb

[9] OCHA, 18 Feb



## 03 Damage and Impact

Across the Syrian Arab Republic, seven hospitals and 145 health facilities have been damaged.<sup>10</sup>

While the vast majority of health facilities have remained operational, they continue to be overcrowded and in need of medicines, supplies, equipment, fuel, and lighting.

In Aleppo, 53 buildings collapsed due to the earthquake and 220 at-risk buildings have been demolished.

In Lattakia, local authorities reported that 103 buildings have collapsed and 300 buildings are at risk of collapsing.<sup>11</sup> At least 1,941 schools were damaged, 40 of which were out of service with 21 teachers and 123 students killed by the earthquake.

More than 535,000 children cannot resume their education before school buildings are safe and ready to accommodate them. Nevertheless, students started attending classes gradually in the affected governorates.<sup>12</sup>

More than 12 hours of electricity cuts per day and weak internet communication as well as significant fuel shortages are hampering the relief response.

Mobile network stations are damaged and the Syrian Telecom are underway to restore the communication in Aleppo and Lattakia.



[10] WHO 22 Feb

[11] OCHA, Feb 18

[12] SANA, 17 Feb, SANA, 22 Feb



# Updates on MECC Interventions & response preparation

The MECC Diakonia delegation is currently on the ground in Aleppo in order to assess the updated needs and to design the coordination mechanism following the initiation of the Ecumenical earthquake emergency committee by MECC member churches and other church related organizations that are active on the ground.

MECC team met with the coordinator of the aforementioned committee in order to discuss different activity procedures related to different emergency activities and the appropriate coordination modalities.

On Monday, February 27th, and under the invitation of HE Metropolitan Ephraim Malouli, Metropolitan of Aleppo and Iskandaroun, an extended meeting took place in St Elias Hall in Aleppo which included in addition to the head of churches, technical engineers, in addition to representatives of churches in the ecumenical relief committee and representatives of different local and international church related organizations active on Aleppo soil to discuss the affected building assessments, s.







**HE Bishop Joseph Tobji  
Maronite Archbishop of Aleppo**

Following the welcoming note from the host and the introduction of the head of the relief ecumenical committee HE Bishop Joseph Tobji who reminded the attendees that the churches in Aleppo have a history of joint ecumenical work, the Ecumenical Committee for Relief in Aleppo was formed with the encouragement of the Middle East Council of Churches so that the churches work together hand in hand with the grace of the Spirit God, for the support of the affected children of the Church as well as of the people of various religious affiliations in Aleppo. "We always seek to establish the Christian presence in Aleppo, and when churches cooperate together, their role becomes more effective," his eminence Bishop Toby stressed.

The course of discussions concentrated on the following activities:

- Designing the modality of affected building assessment;
- Reimbursement policy to families who did quick rehabilitation in their apartments.
- Modality of providing rent subsidies to families whose apartments are not safe;
- Implementation' modalities related to other activities such as but not limited to: cash assistance, distribution of lifesaving aids, education support and medication.
- Ways to coordinate the data of beneficiaries to be checked regularly by all actors to prevent duplication.

In order to proceed with assessment of affected buildings, MECC has launched the operation by selecting more than 25 certified engineers according to the regulation of the Aleppo municipalities to do the assessment and classify the buildings which are deemed to be safe, moderately safe, non-safe. The assessment should finish within 30 days and based on the result of the assessment, the Ecumenical Earthquake Relief Committee will screen the data and proceed with rehabilitation work accordingly. During the mission visit in Aleppo, the team will meet with all head of churches in Aleppo, UN people, different NGOs as well as with representatives of the Directorate of Education to get better ideas on future needs and future interventions. In parallel, the MECC technical team is visiting different church related affected buildings such as churches, schools and clinics to assess the need of possible future interventions.



# Video Reports :

click on picture to access the videos



**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 Maalouli, Greek Orthodox Metropolitan of Aleppo, Alexandretta and Dependencies, after the Earthquake that Struck Syria**



**5- A New Baby Born in Earthquake Rubble**  
Mohamad Bitar Explains the Difficult Situations He Passed Through with His Family



**6- In Seconds... Everything Changed**  
Manal Bitar Reports the First Moments of Terror



# Photo Albums :

click on picture to access the albums



Album 1- The Scenes of Destructions in Syria  
In Some Photos Taken by MECC



Album 2- Difficult Humanitarian Conditions in Syria  
New Photos Shows the Massive Disaster



Album 3- Photos from the Heart of the Tragedy in Syria