



مجلس كنائس الشرق الأوسط

The Middle East Council of Churches

## DIAKONIA DEPARTMENT- SERVICE IN DIGNITY

Rescue Syria Update - 10

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The Middle East Council of Churches

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One of homeless family members in Jableh living in a tent after being evacuated from her home

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Matthew 11:28



## *We are vulnerable but strong in faith*

*We left Aleppo to Lattakia with confidence that Solidarity among different stakeholders to respond to the people's needs will make a difference and preserve the Aleppo cohesive society. We passed by long roads surrounded by green valleys and also deserted towns which became empty from human being during the Syrian's war. We wonder if one day, a new resurrection can bring life to those places? We passed by the Christian valley that embrace St. George Monastery which dates back to the 6th century, and Tartous, as well as Banias. These places had important roles in Syria's history. Its castles located in its hills reflect the reality of different positive and negative historical eras between the West and the East.*

*We arrived to crowded Lattakia which host hundreds of thousands of displaced people from many parts of Syria during the war. This city includes Ugarit, one of the oldest civilized city by the Mediterranean Sea from the Seventh millennium BC which spread the first Alphabetical to the entire world. We headed to the old part of Lattakia where the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Antioch is located to meet with the Ecumenical Relief committee that has been initiated recently by the Orthodox Archdiocese. During the meeting, we met with all Church representatives from different Church Families to listen to their stories and to see how the Middle East Council of Churches can help them and coordinate with them to ease the suffering of the affected people by the earthquake. We were touched by the Ecumenical spirit and determination of Churches to work together in one hand and one spirit.*

*A beautiful overview was presented by a member of the Orthodox Relief Committee on how the Church is trying to assess the people's needs at different levels. We were blessed to hear how other Churches are ready to join their resources by adopting similar intervention's approach and modality. Likewise, MECC informed the assembly about its possible resources and the lesson learned from the coordination mechanisms built in Aleppo. We learned a lot from everyone we met during our mission. In fact, love can bridge distances between people towards unity. As well as, how shared sufferings can motivate people to be united in a peaceful spirit. Challenges also can be transformed into solid perseverance towards unity in faith and action. SL*



# Huge losses in all sectors

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Living in Syria means that you have to witness disasters, wars, displacement, emigration, loss and pandemics. Everyone living under the sky of Syria has passed through bitter experiences and difficult circumstances.

Syria's people didn't know tranquility neither good days since the outbreak of the war in 2011. What they lived through these years is unforgettable and has made them exhausted with tired souls.

After years of harsh war, a devastating earthquake measuring 7.7 on the Richter scale struck the wounded Syria. Thousands were killed and injured. Following this earthquake, we can't say anything, but rather ask, how many dreams and hopes were buried under the rubble? How many projects, ambitions and aspirations have been shattered? As well as, homes and shops were destructed and crumbling walls were unable to withstand the earthquake.

In fact, all sectors have been affected due to the earthquake repercussions. This is in addition to damages in residential buildings, government institutions and many of their facilities. The Ministry of Oil had to suspend the Baniyas oil refinery for 2 days, while the Ministry of Education announced that nearly 600 government schools were damaged, and other institutions have been evacuated.

In this context, a professor at the Faculty of Economics at Tishreen University expects that the economic impact of the earthquake in Syria will initially reach more than \$1.1 billion. As well as, the economic cost in general is expected to reach about 1.6% of the GDP, and the impact may continue. This cost is for a period up to 8 years.

The researcher adds that the individuals' losses as a result of losing homes and materials may cost about 300 million Syrian pounds per house.

Moreover, if we estimate the number of collapsed buildings to be about 150 buildings including 200 thousand apartments, in addition to about 3000 buildings that are threatened with collapse, then individual losses could be 450 billion Syrian pounds.

This is in addition to the costs of restoring and repairing about 30,000 damaged houses due to the earthquake, so individuals' losses could be about 900 billion Syrian pounds. Furthermore, government losses may far exceed this number, as it may reach about one billion dollars (6.9 trillion Syrian pounds).



## 01 Assessment of the conditions of buildings in Aleppo:

After selecting the certified engineers to assess the level of damage of many buildings, a training session was organized by the Middle East Council of Churches with the technical specialized engineer in order to explain the steps of assessment and how to fill the data on adopted form by the Municipality of Aleppo. The engineers were divided into different small teams to begin their mission that should finish by the end of March 2023. The assessments are taking place and periodical validated reports will be sent to MECC in order plan for following interventions according to the level of damage in coordination with MECC partners.



Training on building assessment in Aleppo



A team of engineers are setting up a plan to conduct the building assessment in their sector

## 02 Consolidating the beneficiary data in Aleppo:

The detailed data is finished and will be used by all members of Ecumenical Relief Committee for different activities. MECC is preparing the data for cash assistance and distribution of food and non-food items. Additionally, MECC technical team is assessing many schools that needs rehabilitation and whose structure is safe. Preparation of education and medication support are under assessment in partnership with many parties working in the same sectors.



Training on building assessment in Aleppo



### 03 Preparation of the MECC intervention in Lattakia and Jableh:

MECC is in process to distribute food and non-food items in Jableh, in addition to cash assistance in Lattakia along with medication support. Collective data is ready to use for any shared activity with the Ecumenical Relief Committee in Lattakia.



Affected buildings in Jableh

### 04 MECC intervention in central Syria:

In order to meet the needs of displaced people from Aleppo to the Christian valley and different villages and due to the needs of families to blankets because they are hosted in summer apartments belonging to the host communities, MECC distributed 250 blankets to 83 families. Noting that more distribution will take place in other places that host IDPs from Aleppo.



Blankets distribution in Central Syria in Hewash town



Blankets distribution to IDPs families in Aleppo in Hewash town

# Testimonies From the Field



**M (42 years old), mother of two children (16 and 12 years old), says: “During the war, we suffered a lot from the deteriorating economic situation and the high cost of living, especially that my husband is the only breadwinner for the family and he works as a government employee. The salary he earns is not enough to buy food for the family. We didn’t experience displacement during the war, but we are living it today... It is a very difficult experience, for there is nothing worse than being forced to leave your home, leaving everything you own, after spending a lifetime preparing all the necessary to establish a house including everything you need.”**

**“We are broken and our hearts are tired because we are fully aware that we are unable to compensate for what we lost. We are unable to buy another house, and even to buy another chair other than the one we lost.”**

**“The experience of the earthquake was very hard for us. That’s why we were displaced because, especially that our house has cracks and we cannot return to it. Today we are living as guests in a relatives’ house in the village of Ain Al-Ghara in Homs countryside. Despite their warm welcome, we feel that we are making pressure on them, as we are all facing hard economic difficulties, and no one can take care of two families at the same time.”**

**“The Middle East Council of Churches offered us blankets, and this is a nice gesture, since no one has provided us with anything since a month when we were displaced. We still need food and financial aid because we want to rent a house.”**

**D (68 years old man), a retired employee, says: “The earthquake experience is unlike any other experience. We were hearing strange sounds coming from the ground, and the house was shaking very violently. We were anxious and ran out into the street to avoid any danger especially that the house would fall and we would be buried alive under the rubble. We stayed in the street under the rain, and we slept in the car for three days because we were afraid that any roof would fall on us due to any other earthquake. Then, we traveled to the village of Blat in Homs countryside to a relative's house.”**

**“Our house in Lattakia has now many cracks and we cannot return to it. We are at an age where it is difficult for us to re-establish a house again, especially since the economic situation in Syria is very difficult, and that’s why we are feeling helplessness. The Middle East Council of Churches provided us blankets for each of my family members. I hope that the Council will continue to help us because our financial situation is bad, as well as the situation of the family that welcomed us after we sought refuge in its house. I hope that you can provide us with food, detergents, and soap, which are now much needed, especially that we are many individuals in one house.”**



# 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



Album 4- Photos Showing the Bitter Humanitarian  
Situations in Syria