



مجلس كنائس الشرق الأوسط  
The Middle East Council of Churches

## DIAKONIA DEPARTMENT- SERVICE IN DIGNITY

Rescue Syria Update - 15

April 27<sup>th</sup> 2023



 المجلس كنائس الشرق الأوسط  
The Middle East Council of Churches  
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Distribution of medicines, wheel chairs and other accessories to affected people in Central Syria

"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." Galatians 6:2

## ***A country struggling with death... From the calamity of war to the disaster of the earthquake!***

*Syria is the cradle of civilizations... if you are in Syria, you are where history speaks, for on this land the most magnificent civilizations were born, and the most accomplished achievements were made.*

*The famous French archaeologist, Charles Ferlout, interpreter of the cuneiform texts discovered in Ugarit, said: "Every civilized human being in this world has two homelands; his native country and Syria." However, this homeland has now become a wounded country bleeding with pain and poverty; its people are shackled by endless afflictions of displacement, poverty, loss, and defeat. Every time the Syrians awaken from calamity, they get struck by a new one, until they had become completely exhausted, living with memories of days of prosperity and peace. When Syria is wounded, the whole world bleeds with sorrow and pain. Hence, how can we heal Syria's wounds so as to restore happiness to its people? The earthquake that struck Syria, and which had very bad effects on the people of Aleppo, Lattakia, Hama, and Jableh, was nothing but a continuation of the tragedies that this country has been experiencing for the past 12 years.*

*We all witnessed what happened in Syria as a result of the earthquake that struck it, but those who only watched this catastrophe on TV and social media may not be able to touch the scale of the tragedy experienced by the people of the afflicted cities. Meanwhile those who visited those cities and met its people, were able to hear their sad stories and touch on a harsh reality and painful events that actually took place and are not a figment of imagination. Can you imagine waking up one day to find yourself stuck between the ceiling and the ground, not knowing how to escape?! In one second, the earth turned over and collapsed, and people who have gone through this difficult experience still recall images of that terrifying day that they described as "Judgment Day". Some of them took a long time to dare to sleep again under a room's ceiling.*

*So let us help Syria in any way we can, for whoever revives it has revived all people. Syria today is a wounded country that is still suffering from the woes of war and its harsh consequences...it is still struggling with death.*

## Highlights

### IN THE WHOLE OF SYRIA

**8.8 million** Population directly affected in **170** sub-districts in **43** districts in **10** governorates.

**6,000** people have reportedly been killed and more than **12,000** injured.

**97,400** households have been displaced in Syria.

**3.7 million** children and pregnant and lactating women, have been affected, young people make up **28.4** per cent of the total population in earthquake affected communities

**2.38 million** Women of reproductive age in the impacted regions (estimate)

**141,000** students are still lacking access to schools because the schools are out of service or being used as shelter

**2,947** Damaged schools, of these, **2,299** lightly damaged schools have reopened, while around **90** schools continue to be used as collective shelters in Aleppo, Lattakia, Tartous and Hama.

**116** health facilities reported damages (including at least seven hospitals) in Aleppo, Hama, Lattakia and Tartous.

In Northwest (NW) Syria, at least **55** health facilities have been damaged with **15** health facilities having suspended activities.

[1] UNICEF, 18 Apr

[2] UNICEF, 18 Apr

[3] UNFPA, 20 Apr

[4] UNICEF, 18 Apr

[5] OCHA, 19 Apr

[6] IFRC, 20 Apr

**Three in every four people in Aleppo have had to reduce daily meals since the earthquake and nearly all of them say they have taken on extra debt or pulled their children out of school in order to cope.”**

**Twenty-two percent of 300 affected people surveyed had lost their jobs or sources of income, and 37% had borrowed money to cover their families’ needs.**

**In Aleppo, many families remain homeless without information about where they can or will eventually reside. As all shelters in Aleppo were closed on 13 April by the Government and just 100 families were moved 17 to mid-term accommodation. Families with homes which are marked as safe but require some rehabilitation, can either return or move temporarily to mid-term shelters in Hanano area. These families will be allowed to stay in two rehabilitated shelters in Hanano for a short period until they finalize maintenance of their homes and/or access needed documentation. Humanitarian actors are requested to prioritize the response for affected people in host communities and returnees.**

**In Aleppo, Lattakia, and Hama, temporary collective shelters continue to host over 44,200 people. Additionally, the movement of internally displaced persons (IDPs) to mid-term shelters is underway. No concrete timelines have been set to finalize this step.**

**In Lattakia, 15 shelters are hosting 813 families or 3,331 people, compared to 17 shelters as of 30 March. The Department of Education in Lattakia has been coordinating with the Emergency Committee to relocate families taking shelter in schools in order to resume education activities. To date, eight schools have been evacuated, reducing the number of schools used as shelter in Lattakia to nine. IDPs are transferred to mid-term shelters. The Government confirmed that they will start building prefabricated apartments as part of the long-term planning. The first batch is anticipated to consist of some 1,000 units across the Governorate. Additionally, China delivered 228 prefabs to be installed in the affected areas across the country. The high number of people who lost their livelihoods due to the earthquake exacerbates short-term and longer-term protection risks. While, increasing numbers of child labour cases and children dropping out of school lead to additional child protection concerns.**

**The need for child protection and GBV services remains high in the earthquake-affected areas. Two months into the response, affected women, men and children are still living in stressful situations.**

**The Report of Syria Global Rapid Post-Disaster Damage Estimation (GRADE) estimates \$5.1 billion in direct physical damages. The World Bank says, “Direct damages to residential buildings account for nearly half of total damages (48.5% of the median value or US\$2.5 billion), while damages in non-residential buildings (e.g., health facilities, schools, government buildings, and private sector buildings) account for one third of the total impact (33.5% or US \$9.7 billion).” Additionally, the GRADE Report for Syria found that “Aleppo (population of 4.2 million) was the most severely hit governorate with 45% of the estimated damages (US\$2.3 billion) followed by Idlib (37% or US\$1.9 billion) and Lattakia (11% or US\$549 million).”**

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[7] Oxfam, 14 Apr

[8] UNICEF, 18 Apr

[9] OCHA, 19 Apr

[10] The Center for Disaster Philanthropy’s (CDP), 24 April

# MECC intervention in response to the Earthquake:

## A- Reinforcements of affected buildings in Aleppo

The engineering team in Aleppo continues its mission to assess the structural status of affected buildings. Out of the target to assess 1200 buildings, 1200 buildings have been assessed to date, to identify the number of buildings that need reinforcement. Seven buildings are ready for reinforcement works after completing all engineering studies and getting the required license. MECC will begin receiving offers from contractors to launch the work the soonest. Other selected buildings are under studies to be included in the new tendering process.



One of the buildings that will be reinforced soon

## B- Distribution of lifesaving items:

MECC Continues to distribute food and hygiene kits in addition to school kits, medicines and medical accessories in Aleppo and central Syria. To date, MECC distributed the following items under different grants received from MECC partners.

- 7589 food and hygiene kits
- 1800 food baskets
- 500 blankets
- 500 child protection tools and games
- 1200 buildings of original target have assessed to identify buildings that need quick or moderate intervention.
- Medicines and different medical accessories for special needs people are being distributed in Aleppo and in central Syria.



Distribution of food and hygiene kits in Aleppo



Distribution of medicines in Aleppo from MECC office



Distribution of wheel chairs in Central Syria



Distribution of medicines in central Syria



Distribution of children protection tools and games in Aleppo



Distribution of children protection tools and games in Aleppo

# Testimonies

## Medication assistance

**R (75 years old) from Aleppo.** She had a stroke and now suffers from hemiplegia. She says, "MECC provided me with a wheelchair that helped me leave the house. I had an old wheelchair that I received from a donor, but its wheels didn't move easily, and my daughter was unable to push it. I was always trapped in the house. The new wheelchair moves easily, so now I can leave the house and enjoy the outdoors in the garden."

**A (83 years old) from Aleppo,** is a sick widowed woman who lives in the house of a relative. She needed a wheelchair as she suffers from rheumatoid arthritis. She says, "My dream was to be able to leave the house and mingle with people, but it seemed impossible because wheelchairs are too expensive and I have no one to support me financially except for my nephew who is the sole breadwinner of his own family. So, I was bedridden.

I thought I would die before my dream could come true, but God helped me through MECC and fulfilled my wish. I am very happy now... Today I went out of the house for the first time in years... Thank you very much for giving me life again."



## From Central Syria in rural western Homs

**M (62 years old) a patient from the villages of Christian valley in rural western Homs,** said: "I have been battling cancer for three years, and this disease has drained me physically and financially. I had to sell my car and the piece of land which I inherited from my family, to be able to secure the cost of treatment and surgery. I also suffer from arthritis and need a lot of medication in addition to cancer treatment, which increases the financial burden on me, especially since I cannot work due to illness. My two daughters are young and cannot work, and my wife is a homemaker.

MECC provided me with the medications I need, this will help me save money to secure the cost of cancer treatment. I have approached many associations, but they were not able to provide such assistance because the prices of medications are constantly increasing."

**A (mother) of K (8 years old) from Christian valley in rural western Homs** said: "My daughter was diagnosed with viral encephalitis, which led to epilepsy, and she needs chronic medication for life. I work as a government employee with a low salary, and my husband is a simple laborer with no fixed monthly salary, so my daughter's medication is an additional financial burden on us. During the war, we were displaced from Aleppo to Christian valley and we live in the house of my husband's father. I find it very difficult to balance the family's expenses and the cost of the medication that K needs. I appreciate MECC's assistance very much because it saved me the money that I can use to secure some types of food that I usually do not buy in order to save money to buy the medication."

# 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



6 - Interview with His Eminence Archbishop Mor Boutros Kassis Following the Earthquake that Shook the North of the Antiochian Levant



7 - Syria is Still Crying Out in Pain After the Earthquake that Struck the North of the Antiochian Levant  
A Survivor Reports the Bitter Situations She Passed Through Following the

# 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