



GREEK ORTHODOX PATRIARCHATE OF ANTIOCH AND ALL THE EAST DEPARTMENT OF ECUMENICAL RELATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT

 FRIEND ON FACEBOOK

ABOUT THE LOGO



DERD has chosen the parable of the Good Samaritan as its logo because it reflects the concept of service to all without any discrimination and this service is based on loving our neighbor as ourselves.

Dear Eminences, Graces, Reverends, partners, sisters and brothers in Christ,

Fifteen months have passed under the Syrian crisis, while the international community still attempts to finalize a peaceful solution to safeguard the stability and sovereignty of the country and of the people of Syria. In the meantime, directly affected people and internally displaced Syrians are still living in uncertain conditions, and are still depending on aid provided by the government through the Syrian Red Crescent, and aid from many local charities and local NGOs.

It is not easy to anticipate such conditions facing many Syrians who used to enjoy life filled with dignity, security and stability.

It is not easy to witness the many people who have become displaced in their own country after losing their homes, businesses, jobs and all that they have achieved over the years.

It is not easy to see children away from their homes and their communities, as if they have become strangers in their homeland.

It is not easy to see the elderly, handicapped and sick begging for medicine or health care in these times; when they used to enjoy a secured life, and now live with no hope about their future and destiny.

It is not easy to see your own residential area destroyed; where many have built dreams and memories...

These are a little of the realities that Syria has been witnessing over the months.

The question remains...Who will benefit from creating violence and conflicts where no one wins at all?

Who will benefit from having Syria--a country where all citizens are living together equally and enjoying the same rights without any discrimination, a country of ancient civilizations, and a country that is the cradle of religions--to be an unstable place?

Who will benefit from having Syria, as a place where all can live together peacefully in a society based on religious tolerance and belonging and on the concept that “faith is in the One God and the country is for all” ruined?

In witnessing the above challenges, The Department of Ecumenical Relations and Development (DERD) at the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and all the East has responded immediately to the emerging needs of the Syrian unrests. DERD has mobilized its human and financial resources to assess the needs and classify the urgent needs in order to proceed with its humanitarian aid programs. An appeal was launched to all Orthodox Antiochian Archdioceses and to all partners under the blessing of the Primate of the Antiochian See, HB Patriarch Ignatius IV, to request immediate support in order to enact national and church responsibilities towards the affected people.

Many have responded immediately to our appeal: International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC), The Church of Cyprus, The Church of Kurheisen Waldeck in Germany, ACT Alliance through IOCC, Jumah al Majed Association, the Antiochian Archdioceses in the Diaspora, and the Pontifical Mission in Lebanon. These contributions have allowed DERD to work effectively and efficiently under difficult circumstances with limited resources gathered to help many suffering people in non-discriminatory ways. And in order to put our pledge “Faith in Action” into work, DERD has coordinated its work with all local churches, the Syrian Red Crescent and other Islamic organizations in the country.

Therefore, and in order to fulfill with utmost transparency and credibility in our work, we put in your hands our achievements to date.

- 1- Distribution of humanitarian parcels: 14,028 hygiene kits, 2,608 infant kits, 2,500 bedding sets, 200 mattresses, 1,055 kitchen sets, 1,000 infant kits including milk and food.
- 2- Distribution of food kits: 3,320 food kits.
- 3- Supporting families with rent subsidies.
- 4- Distribution of baby kits and hygiene kits through a special donation from IOCC: 38,000 beneficiaries

Table of Total Distributions

	Food Items	Mattresses	Bedding Sets	Infant Kits	Hygiene Kits	Kitchen Sets
Damascus	-	-	887	1,105	2,916	246
Hama			61	44	261	-
Homs	3,320	200	1,222	2,155	8,677	616
Latakia	-	-	30	11	209	25
Swaida	-	-	50	28	50	38
Tartous	-	-	250	265	1,915	130
Total	3,320	200	2,500	3,608	14,028	1,055

The following activities are in the immediate emergency response plan.

- 1- Supporting families with clothing: 1,500 families
- 2- Supporting families with rent subsidies.
- 3- Supporting students with remedial classes and tuition fees in their schools.
- 4- Supporting traumatized families and children psychologically.
- 5- Supporting affected children with recreational programs.
- 6- Special awareness program on health and nutrition issues to prevent the facing medical problems.

Second phase of the emergency response:

- 1- Supporting the affected bishoprics like Homs and Hama to restore their damaged entities, for example schools, churches and guest houses.
- 2- Helping families return to their homes by providing funds to restore their homes.
- 3- Helping bread winners to reestablish their businesses so to feed their families.
- 4- Contributing to the restoration and rebuilding of national unity through dialogue and peace building programs.

The most significant support and contribution was the gifts offered to the Syrian Red Crescent, which composed of medical kits and surgical operation tools provided by IOCC. This medical shipment costs around 350,000.00 US\$.

You can expect a summary of our executed activities every month so you may be aware of our achievements.

Every year, after the Paschal Season that stretches from the Resurrection through Pentecost, the Church enters a season that is called the Fast of the Apostles. As the Apostles started to prepare for their departure from Jerusalem to spread the Word of our Lord, they began to fast and asked God to provide them strength and to be with them during their missionary undertakings. The apostles served the Lord Jesus Christ and then provided leadership to the first generation of Christian believers.

The Feast of Pentecost precedes our entrance into this period, and the lesson we learned from this feast is that the Holy Spirit would not dwell in separated or fragmented people but on united people in Jesus Christ.

This unity is not an idea or a concept, but an action. An action, that can be tangible in work and in faith, and in visible love that should be offered to each human being saved by the cross of our Lord.

In difficult times, people are called to express their love, solidarity, and action, so that we all can be called disciples of our Savior Jesus Christ.

Let us unite our efforts so that the Holy Spirit may dwell in us; to inspire us to do God's Will in our suffering world and to translate our faith into actions

Yours,

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