

Joint statement by FMSI and SED on the fundraising campaign for Syria

19 April 2023

The city of Aleppo, already devastated by the war and its aftermath, suffered a **terrible earthquake** of magnitude 7.8 on February 6th at 04:17 local time. In Aleppo, the situation was already extremely difficult: more than a quarter of the population was displaced and many people were already living in severe economic difficulties. Many families could not afford basic necessities for their children and the elderly were forced under the circumstances to live alone. To these economic and social dramas was added the emergency caused by the **earthquake that affected the population of northern Syria**. Many buildings have been damaged or destroyed. The emergency situation of those who have become homeless must be addressed. There are still many families who are homeless, in tents, waiting for their homes to be renovated or at least considered habitable. Many children are forced to work instead of going to school. The humanitarian situation is even more serious with the situation of **international sanctions**. The current sanctions against Syria, introduced in 2011, are supposed to be designed not to hinder the delivery of humanitarian aid. But because of the sanctions the export of food, medicine and medical equipment remains very difficult.

The Marist world has come together to help Syria face and overcome this new emergency. To date, FMSI and SED have collected financial contributions from all over the world for a total of € 816,557, from more than 2,500 donors, both individuals and legal entities. The first funds sent have already been used by the **Blue Marists of Aleppo** to provide first aid to the affected population after the first consequences of the earthquake, covering the most urgent needs such as providing hot meals, hygiene and personal hygiene material, mattresses, blankets and fuel for heating.

The rest of the funds raised are being used to face the consequences in the medium and long term and try to recover normality after the catastrophe suffered. Some of the initiatives that have been launched are:

- Contribute to the payment of housing rents for 1 year to families who have lost their home
- Financial collaboration to help defray the costs of refurbishing damaged homes.
- Collaborate in macro projects of economic reactivation, which allow especially young people to start businesses.
- Contribute to strengthening psychological care with a large part of the affected population.

The network of 155 volunteers, boys and girls from Aleppo, Christians and Muslims is the beating heart of the Marist organization: a team of educators and social workers engaged in **14 projects that reach the poorest and most vulnerable areas of Aleppo**. On March 2, the "*I want to learn*" project, an educational program for 120 children between 3 and 5 years old, resumed. In addition, the delivery of food parcels to more than 1000 families who have lost everything, the distribution of powdered milk to more than 3000 children, the home delivery of 250 hot meals for the elderly who were left alone, resilience programs to more than 500 children and young people continue to be maintained. The contribution of the Blue Marists of Aleppo is enormous.

Thank you all for your help and support.

On behalf of FMSI and SED this is an invitation to continue developing a culture of solidarity as an expression of the global charismatic family, not only in these dramatic moments that awaken the collective conscience, but always.

As long as there is only one person who needs our help.



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