



## IOCC ASSISTS SYRIAN FAMILIES ESCAPING BLOODSHED IN IDLIB

As the security and humanitarian situation in Idlib, Syria, continues to deteriorate following escalated fighting this past spring, IOCC and church partner in Syria, the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East (GOPA), is providing emergency medical assistance, hygiene kits, and personal care items to displaced Idlib families who have fled to the Syrian port city of Lattakia.

According to staff on the ground, approximately 300 of the nearly 5,000 displaced people fleeing Idlib arrived in Lattakia with injuries, many related to flying shrapnel. Some of them arrived alone knowing nothing about the rest of their families, while others managed to get out with their families intact. "I escaped with all of my 14 family

members," said Fadi, a displaced Idlib resident. "We barely fit in the small car which was our only transportation. Many cars around us crashed as they tried to flee, because they were shot by a sniper while trying to escape the city."

Rami, who also fled Idlib, said he and his 9-year-old daughter made it out through the city's sewage channels to avoid snipers. They walked all night to reach safety, but he now faces new fears for his family. "My daughter is in complete shock from what she witnessed, and I can't stop thinking about my parents who are still trapped in Idlib." IOCC/GOPA is helping traumatized parents like Rami through counseling that will equip them and their children with the

coping skills they need to deal with such difficult experiences.

In addition to those families who fled to Lattakia, IOCC/GOPA rapid action teams are on the ground responding to the needs of other families arriving to the cities of Hamah and Jableh with relief such as shelter, bedding, clothing, and hygiene kits.

### Inside News & Needs

- Saving Soles From A Disabling Foot Disease In Ethiopia ..... pg. 2
- From The Executive Director ..... pg. 2
- The Savory Smell Of Success For Bosnia's Entrepreneurs ..... pg. 3
- Nepal's Earthquake Victims Face Homelessness And Hunger ..... pg. 3
- Spiritual Reflection ..... pg. 4

FROM THE  
EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR

Dear IOCC friends,

For many of us, summer is the season when we pack our bags, lock up our homes, and trade our daily routines for a family getaway.

While we take pleasure in the escape, we also find comfort in knowing that home will be waiting for us when we return.

Sadly, families facing war or natural disasters often don't have homes to go back to.

In Syria, IOCC is helping thousands of families displaced by war by improving access to safe shelter, education, and healthcare.

For Nepal's earthquake victims, IOCC is providing the materials needed for temporary housing until family homes can be rebuilt.

As you read their stories and others about how your financial support is restoring hope and stability, please keep these families in your prayers. They too deserve to find the comfort and safety that home brings.

In Christ,

Constantine M. Triantafilou  
Executive Director & CEO

SAVING SOLES FROM  
A DISABLING FOOT  
DISEASE IN ETHIOPIA

Adamena was a fresh-faced bride of 17 when she first noticed the swelling in her feet and legs. The teen never suspected that walking barefoot on the irritating volcanic soil so prevalent in her Ethiopian village could be causing her condition, podoconiosis, or podo for short. When it began to affect her appearance and ability to walk, Adamena's husband abandoned her. With no education or job skills, she had nowhere else to go but back to work, still barefoot, on her parents' farm.

Her condition only grew worse, making it more painful and difficult to be on her feet. It is a tragic situation that is repeated too often across the country's rural areas. More than three million Ethiopians suffer from this disabling disease and another 38 million are at risk for podo. Working in cooperation with the Ethiopian Orthodox Church-Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission and podo expert, Dr. Gail Davey, and with support from TOMS Shoes, IOCC has developed a patient-centered model to prevent and treat this neglected tropical disease. Since 2009, IOCC has provided shoes, awareness, treatment, and foot care supplies to more than 300,000 children and adults suffering from or at risk of developing podo.

Adamena came to one of IOCC's six podo clinics after learning about it from local elders. Clinic staff treated her feet and taught her the importance of washing her feet and wearing shoes to prevent the disease. Now 20, the young woman is on the road to recovery as her swelling and walking ability improve every day. Smiles come more easily to Adamena now as the improvements fuel new hopes to be active again and build a better life for herself.



Corina Maranu/IOCC

International Orthodox Christian Charities, Inc. (IOCC) is the official humanitarian relief agency of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America and a member of the ACT Alliance, a global coalition of churches and agencies engaged in development, humanitarian assistance and advocacy.

*IOCC, in the spirit of Christ's love, offers emergency relief and development programs to those in need worldwide, without discrimination, and strengthens the capacity of the Orthodox Church to so respond.*



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## THE SAVORY SMELL OF SUCCESS FOR BOSNIA'S ENTREPRENEURS

With a family recipe for a traditional Bosnian meat pie called *burek* and years of bakery experience working for others, Maja, 36, opened her own pastry shop in Novi Grad, Bosnia-Herzegovina, using a small loan she borrowed through a microcredit program offered by IOCC. Business is brisk and not only helps support the entrepreneur's family of four, but also provides her baking assistant, Mira, with enough earnings to help fund a son's medical school education.

Maja's success was fueled by hard work and an IOCC fund disbursing more than \$19 million in small loans since 2002 to enterprising men and women growing businesses in agriculture, services, retail, and small-scale production. The microcredit program has had a positive ripple effect on the post-war economy in Bosnia's Republika Srpska. The 1,800 jobs created by the new businesses support more than 31,000 family members, and the nearly 100 percent repayment rate ensures funds will be available to fuel the entrepreneurial spirit for future business owners.



Nikola Culic/IOCC

## NEPAL'S EARTHQUAKE VICTIMS FACE HOMELESSNESS AND HUNGER



NAVESH CHITRAKAR/Reuters

Kathmandu, Nepal's historic capital city, lies in rubble. When a deadly 7.9 earthquake rocked Nepal on April 25, 2015, killing 8,000 people and leaving hundreds of thousands homeless,

IOCC, an ACT Alliance member, responded immediately to support relief partners on the ground providing emergency relief.

Through relief partner, Lutheran World Federation, IOCC provided

support for emergency assistance to families in need, including the distribution of life-saving supplies such as ready to eat food, blankets, and tarpaulins to serve as emergency shelters. IOCC continues to support the ongoing relief efforts to provide food baskets to 20,000 families; essential household and personal care items to 20,000 families; shelter for 12,000 survivors; cash grants to help rebuild 1,000 family homes; access to a safe and sufficient water supply in the temporary camps, as well as repairs to existing water systems and sanitation facilities for 15,000 families; and crisis counseling to 14,000 people affected by the disaster.

IOCC support for the earthquake relief in Nepal was directed to the hardest hit regions including Kathmandu, Lalitpur, Bhaktapur, Sindupalchowk, Dhading, Lamjung, Kabre, and Gorkha Districts.

# The Church Militant with Spiritual Purpose

With even the most casual look at today's news headlines it is clear that the world is witnessing myriad disasters and tragedies, from natural elements and from human factors. The suffering and loss of life caused by evil forces takes our minds back to the first years of Christianity. Following the establishment of the Church through the crucifixion and the glorious resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, many atrocities terrorized God's people.

Returning our thoughts to present day, we see proof that evil still remains in the world. Among the examples stand the horrific crucifixion and beheading of Christian children in Syria and Iraq, and the recent bloody beheadings of twenty-one Coptic Christians in Libya. Despite such terrible events, Orthodox Christians know that when evil increases and multiplies, our faith and love in God become paradoxically much stronger. We are comforted to know that the militant Church here on earth, strengthened and sustained by the Holy Spirit, has successfully fought and defeated all

expressions of evil from the great day of Pentecost to the present. We know that God's people and His Church will remain as the Lord assures His Apostles even to the day when He returns in glory (*Matt. 16:18*).

As we anticipate that day, we are witnessing a thirst for Orthodox Christianity among an increasing number of people who seek unchanging Good which overcomes evil of this world. As we observe this, there is no question that the Holy Spirit is awakening people who desire absolute truth which is represented by the Lord Jesus Christ Who is the Truth (*Hebrews 13:8*). This bright ray of the Holy Spirit strengthens us to share faith with those who seek the One, True God in His divine Trinitarian nature.

On the basis of these realities, we are filled with great joy and offer up thanksgiving to God for the dedicated Orthodox Christians serving those who seek the love of God and His eternal promises, as well as, the dedicated men and women who combat human suffering and pain prevalent in the world. It is they that



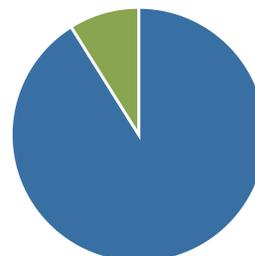
strengthen the Church, the Bride of Christ, until the arrival of the Bridegroom (*Eph. 5:32*) to take His Church into His Kingdom.

Metropolitan Isaiah  
Greek Orthodox  
Archdiocese of America  
Metropolis of Denver

— JOIN —  
**TEAM IOCC!**  
Dedicate your run in a hometown race to IOCC or join our team this fall at the Baltimore Running Festival.  
Learn more at [racetorespond.org](http://racetorespond.org)

## CORRECTION NOTICE

The first edition of the 2014 Year in Review contained a print error in the Financial Summary. CFC/United Way/Other revenue is \$419,638. For a corrected copy, please call 410-243-9820, ext. 2154.



## Your Gifts At Work

In 2014, 91% of IOCC's resources were devoted to humanitarian relief and development programs with only 9% for fundraising and administrative costs.