



# INTERNATIONAL ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHARITIES NEWS & NEEDS

HELPING OTHERS HELP THEMSELVES

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## From Development to Emergency Relief in Lebanon

**Beirut, Lebanon (IOCC)** — “To see your country destroyed over and over again in less than a generation puts you in a position of despair. Luckily, the Lebanese have a gift of forgetting and starting over again.” With words that are courageous and strangely lighthearted in the midst of the complete devastation of her country, IOCC Beirut Program Coordinator Linda Shaker Barbari was one of the key individuals on the ground managing IOCC’s relief effort to 15,000 displaced families from the besieged villages of Southern Lebanon.

IOCC is one of the best positioned humanitarian aid organizations on the ground in Lebanon. Since 2001, IOCC has been implementing a USDA-funded school feeding and education program in Beirut, Mount Lebanon, the South and the North, serving a total of 242 schools and 45,000 students. When war broke out, the IOCC Beirut staff turned what was essentially a development initiative into an emergency relief program for thousands of displaced Lebanese families. Many of those families took shelter in the schools that hosted IOCC’s programs. IOCC coordinated relief efforts with municipalities and Orthodox priests in villages and towns where distribution is taking place. Trucks that normally distributed the IOCC public school meals were used to distribute the emergency aid.



Linda Shaker Barbari

Repacking and handling took place in the St. Joseph Technical School, where school meals were normally packaged and stored. The Beirut office was also able to use the network of food suppliers to procure food and hygiene items, a particular challenge given the security situation.

IOCC began its relief efforts in the Maten and Alley areas of Mount Lebanon, providing \$100,000 worth of food and hygiene parcels to displaced families. Church World Service has pledged 5,000 hygiene kits, 500 collapsible water containers and hundreds of wool blankets to IOCC’s relief efforts.

“I think IOCC is distinctive in its approach because in addition to providing basic food and hygiene supplies, we are also providing educational materials about ways to relieve stress and the importance of food and personal hygiene,” says Barbari. “This will help families cope

better with their environment and prevent problems that might arise due to poor hygienic practices.”

It was especially gratifying for Barbari when she discovered that some of the families taking refuge used to send their children to Al Chasid Abdel Karim, a school in Southern Beirut that participated in the IOCC feeding and education program. “The mothers and children were so happy to see the IOCC team,” says Barbari, “and they immediately started thanking IOCC for their constant generosity and even offered coffee and tea.”



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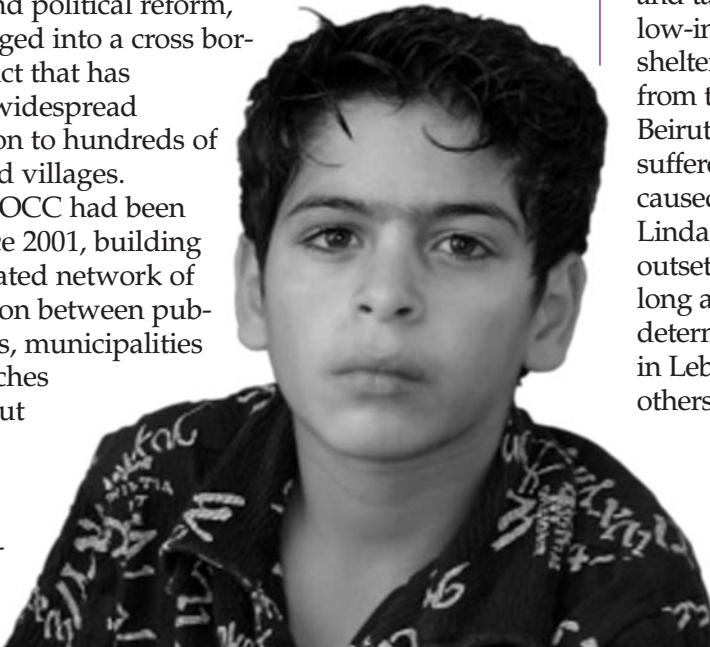
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# From the Executive Director

In the many years that I have worked in the field of development and humanitarian aid, I have found that most people don't want a handout; they want a way to live with dignity. Self-sufficiency is a means to dignity. It is the gift of God to live in such a way that you are productive, independent and able to help others. It is what makes us bearers of the image of God.

Nothing is more gratifying for me than to see an IOCC program achieve its highest objective and empower people to become self-sufficient. This issue of News and Needs highlights five locations, each in very different and pivotal points in their histories. On the Indonesian island of Nias and in the West Bank village of Taybeh, beneficiaries are learning new livelihood skills, taking initiative, and, ultimately, taking control of their lives. In Zimbabwe and the Gaza Strip, a very different reality: the brink of economic and social collapse brings an urgent call for emergency medical aid and the hope that the meeting of basic needs will provide an opening for future development programs.

And finally, Lebanon. A nation that just a few months ago had been enjoying economic revival and political reform, was plunged into a cross border conflict that has brought widespread destruction to hundreds of towns and villages. Because IOCC had been there since 2001, building an integrated network of cooperation between public schools, municipalities and churches throughout Lebanon, we had resources and capabilities that



Linda Shaker Barbari

made us one of the best positioned humanitarian organizations. You will learn how our IOCC Beirut staff, literally overnight, converted our long term USDA-funded education and feeding program into a platform for delivery of emergency aid and shelter. The public schools, where our staff had formerly fed and taught nutrition and environmental lessons to low-income students, were transformed into makeshift shelters for tens of thousands of displaced families from the besieged villages of Southern Lebanon. The Beirut staff accomplished all this while they themselves suffered from the fuel, food, and power shortages caused by the war. Our Beirut program coordinator, Linda Shaker Barbari, was 8 ½ months pregnant at the outset of the crisis, managing our relief efforts through long and tiring days. Her brave actions mirror our own determination as an organization. When the war ends in Lebanon, IOCC will continue to be there, helping others help themselves.

Yours In Christ,

Constantine M. Triantafilou  
Executive Director

International Orthodox Christian Charities, Inc. (IOCC) was established in 1992 by the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA) as the official humanitarian aid agency of Orthodox Christians to work in cooperation with the Orthodox Churches worldwide.

*The mission of IOCC is to respond to the call of our Lord Jesus Christ, to minister to those who are suffering and are in need throughout the world, sharing with them God's gifts of food, shelter, economic self-sufficiency and hope.*

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*To learn more about how IOCC helps others help themselves, please visit [www.iocc.org](http://www.iocc.org)*

# Critical Gaza Medical Support Provided by Greek MFA Gift

**Jerusalem (IOCC)** — IOCC's Nora Kort has many years of experience witnessing the poor and desperate conditions of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. But nothing could have prepared her for her visit to the Al-Masri family of Beit Hanun, one of the poorest and most densely populated areas on the outskirts of Gaza City. "The 10 children had pale faces, decayed teeth and arched backbones, especially the 12 year old girl," said Kort, IOCC Head of Office for Jerusalem/West Bank. "They were all asking their mother for food and the younger ones were crying of hunger. I opened their fridge to find nothing except a plate of cooked bulgur and half an onion."

Like hundreds of thousands of Gazans, the father, Eid Aziz Al-Masri lost his job as a laborer in Israel at the outbreak of the 2000 Intifada when Palestinians were no longer allowed permits to enter Israel. Gaza has been rapidly descending into poverty and chaos due to the suspension of international aid, the freezing of salaries of 165,000 Palestinian Authority employees and daily artillery fire from Israel following the June kidnapping of an Israeli soldier by Hamas militants. The fear now, says Kort, is that families will not be able to afford to send their children to

schools in September. Boys now look for jobs, and girls are sent into early marriages.

But in the midst of this darkness a little opening of light is made by Kort and her Jerusalem IOCC staff through one of their most important outreach programs in the Holy Land, the Gaza Strip Emergency Response Program (GSER). Funded by Hellenic Aid of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Greece, the program provides medicine, nutrition supplements and diagnostic testing for 350 adults and children who live throughout the Gaza Strip. The medical aid is provided through Ahli Arab

Hospital and the Union of Health Care Committees. Hellenic Aid has recently agreed to extend the program with \$90,000 in funding.

Kort confirms that food shortages have become so critical in Gaza that many families survive on bread and tea. Medical staff report children suffering from malnutrition, including anemia, weight and iron deficiency. When Kort asked Sharifeh, the 36-year-old mother of the Al-Masri children if her 3-month old baby is benefiting from the donated milk, Mrs. Al-Masri answers that she shares it with all her children for how can she deny the sick ones?



Yasser Abed

*To learn more about how IOCC helps others help themselves, please visit [www.iocc.org](http://www.iocc.org)*



# IOCC®

# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

**There are four steps that we should all take to help provide for the safety and security of ourselves and our loved ones in the time of an emergency.**

## Step 1: Get a Kit of Emergency Supplies



When disaster strikes, local “911” emergency services may be temporarily overwhelmed and unable to reach everyone immediately. Local officials and relief workers may not be

able to help you for hours or even days. Be prepared to survive on your own for at least three days, during an emergency, maybe longer. You should prepare a kit of emergency supplies now to help you survive until help arrives or until it is safe to go outside. You won’t have time to shop once a disaster hits—or in the case of a chemical or radiological disaster, it may be unsafe to go outside.

Start now by gathering basic emergency supplies — fresh water, food, a flashlight, battery-powered radio, a NOAA Weather radio with tone alert, extra batteries, a first aid kit, toilet articles, prescription medicines and other special things your family may need. Use the enclosed pamphlet prepared by the American Red Cross and the Department of Homeland Security to help you assemble all the items that you may need.

Visit [www.iocc.org/emergency](http://www.iocc.org/emergency) and download the Emergency Financial First Aid Kit to

piece should be several inches larger than the space you want to cover so that you can duct tape it flat against the wall. Label each piece with the location of where it fits.

If you see large amounts of debris in the air, or if local authorities say the air is badly contaminated, you may want to “shelter-in-place.” Quickly bring your family and pets inside, lock doors, and close windows, air vents and fireplace dampers. Immediately turn off air conditioning, forced air heating systems, exhaust fans and clothes dryers. Take your emergency supplies and go into the room you have designated. Seal all windows, doors and vents. Watch TV, listen to the radio or check the Internet for instructions.

**Getting Away:** Plan in advance how you will assemble your family and anticipate where you will go. Choose several destinations in different directions so you have options in an emergency. If you have a car, keep at least a half tank of gas in it at all times. Become familiar with alternate routes as well as other means of transportation out of your area. If you do not have a car, plan how you will leave if you have to. Take your emergency supply kit and lock the door behind you. If you believe the air may be contaminated, drive with your windows and vents closed and keep the air conditioning and heater turned off. Listen to the radio for instructions.

**Develop a Family Communications Plan:** Your family may not be together when disaster strikes, so plan how you will contact one another and review what you will do in different situations. Consider a plan where each family member calls, or e-mails, the same friend or relative in the event of an emergency. It may be

ist threats that will impact the decisions you make and the actions you take. Call your local Red Cross chapter to find out what types of emergencies are most likely to occur in the areas where you live and work. Then contact the IOCC U.S. Programs Department (toll free: 1-866-803-4622) for more detailed information on how to react in those emergencies.

You may be aware of some of your community’s risks: others may surprise you. Historically, flooding is the nation’s single most common natural disaster. Flooding can happen in every U.S. state and territory. Earthquakes are often thought of as a West Coast phenomenon, yet 45 states and territories in the United States are at moderate to high risk from earthquakes and are located in every region of the country. Other disasters may be more common in certain areas. Tornadoes are nature’s most violent storms and can happen anywhere. However, states located in “Tornado Alley,” as well as areas in Pennsylvania, New York, Connecticut, and Florida are at the highest risk for tornado damage. Hurricanes are severe tropical storms that form in the southern Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean Sea, Gulf of Mexico, and in the eastern Pacific Ocean. Scientists can now predict hurricanes, but people who live in coastal communities should plan what they will do if they are told to evacuate.

Talk to your children openly about being prepared for emergencies and staying calm during times of crisis. Include your children in all of your family communication plans and practice home-escape drills. Your children can also visit the Department of Homeland Security’s “Ready Kids” website where they

help your family maintain financial stability during and after an emergency. This kit is a simple tool that helps you to identify and organize key financial records and provides a quick reference file for your most important financial documents.

Consider putting together two kits. In one, put everything needed to stay where you are and make it on your own. The other should be a lightweight, smaller version you can take with you if you have to get away.

## Step 2: Make a Plan for What You Will Do in an Emergency



Be prepared to assess the situation, use common sense and whatever you have on hand to take care of yourself and your loved ones. Depending on your circumstances and the

nature of the disaster, the first important decision is deciding whether to stay where you are or to evacuate to a safer area. You should understand and plan for both possibilities.

**Staying Put:** There are circumstances when staying put and creating a barrier between yourself and potentially contaminated air outside, a process known as “shelter-in-place,” can be a matter of survival. Choose an interior room or one with as few windows and doors as possible. Consider precutting plastic sheeting to seal windows, doors and air vents. Each

easier to make a long-distance phone call than to call across town, so an out-of-state contact may be in a better position to communicate among separated family members. You may have trouble getting through, or the phone system may be down altogether, but be patient.

Visit [www.iocc.org/emergency](http://www.iocc.org/emergency) and download the Family Communication Plan guide to help you develop a plan for your family.

**At Work and School:** Think about the places where your family spends time: school, work and other places you frequent. Talk to your child’s school and your employer about emergency plans. Find out how they will communicate with families during an emergency. If you are an employer, be sure you have an emergency preparedness plan. Review and practice it with your employees. A community working together during an emergency also makes sense. Talk to your neighbors about how you can work together.

## Step 3: Be Informed about what might happen



Some of the things you can do to prepare for the unexpected, such as assembling a supply kit and developing a family communications plan, are the same for both a natural or man-made emergency. However there are important differences among potential terror-

can learn more about disasters and play interactive emergency preparedness games online. Visit <http://www.ready.gov/kids>.

Above all, stay calm, be patient and think before you act. With some simple preparations, you can be ready for the unexpected.

## Step 4: Get involved



Being prepared for emergencies starts with you, but it also takes everyone working together to make our communities safer. We all have a role to play in keeping our

hometowns secure from emergencies of all kinds. Your local officials work hard to help people prepare, train and could use your help as a volunteer.

You can provide valuable assistance to local fire stations, law enforcement, emergency medical services and emergency management. Get connected to disaster volunteer groups such as the American Red Cross or through your local Citizen Corps Council, so that when something happens, you can help in an organized manner.

Visit [www.citizencorps.com](http://www.citizencorps.com) to learn more. Through your local Red Cross chapter, you can receive training in various first aid skills, emergency volunteer services. You can also donate blood, which is of vital importance during an emergency.

### IOCC® Family Communications Plan

Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Out-of-Town-Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Neighborhood Meeting Place: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Meeting Place Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Dial 9-1-1 for Emergencies!**

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**Dial 9-1-1 for Emergencies!**

# Indonesia's Unexpected Tsunami Benefits



**Nias, Indonesia (IOCC)** — Villagers of the northern Sumatra island of Nias, who endured the 2004 tsunami and a major earthquake the following March, enjoyed a day of celebration on July 18 at the dedication of the first new clinic to open in the devastated community. It was an especially gratifying day for Father Chrysostomos P. Manalu, an Indonesian Orthodox priest who has spearheaded the building of the clinic under His Eminence Metropolitan Nikitas of Hong Kong and Southeast Asia, and in cooperation with IOCC and the Orthodox Church of Indonesia.

Along with supporting the building of the clinic, IOCC shipped \$325,400 of new medical supplies and equipment. Part of IOCC's Phase Two development work in Indonesia, the clinic is just one example of how far the multiple projects that are being sponsored by IOCC on Nias have come in just one year.

In the Nias communities of Tugala and Desa Fodoro, IOCC's partnership with Church World Service (CWS) to support an integrated village recovery program also came to fruition this summer. The program will eventually build 100 new homes, half of which are funded by IOCC, and has installed water supply systems and sanitation facilities. The houses, which were designed with input from the villagers, are made with reinforced vertical concrete columns to guard against future earthquakes. Each home employs about 3-4 villagers as construction laborers. "Some organizations have a 'build and leave' approach," says IOCC's Dirk Van Gorp. "What sets this program apart is that it is a participatory community-based integrated

approach that provides for all aspects of village life — homes, livelihood, infrastructure and the psycho-social needs of children."

Just across from housing settlements are farming cooperatives that employ about 75 people working 2 hectares of land. Farmers grow kasabo, pole beans, maize and peanuts. In partnership with CWS, IOCC provided farmers with tools, materials, equipment and training. An IOCC donation of \$30,000 in seeds is planned for the future. "In the past, most Nias farmers had very limited means, growing only rubber and cocoa," said Leo Sambo, Team Leader for CWS in Nias. Farmer Amir Saleh Hia expressed his appreciation to visiting IOCC staff: "Before we were fishermen, but now we are learning a new skill of farming along with fishing in order to be able to support our families . . . Now, can you give us some advice on growing watermelon?"



Dirk Van Gorp



Dirk Van Gorp

# Zimbabwe Crisis Spotlighted Through \$1.5 Million Medical Aid



Carlo Spagnoli M.D.

**Motoko, Zimbabwe (IOCC)** — Skyrocketing inflation and deteriorating social conditions have made it impossible for hundreds of thousands of Zimbabweans to receive adequate medical care. IOCC's recent \$1.5 million shipment of hospital supplies, medical equipment and critically-needed medicines will begin to address this critical need. The shipment to Zimbabwe also represents IOCC's expansion of its Gift in Kind outreach and activities in Africa.

"As little as 10 years ago Zimbabwe was the envy of much of Africa," says IOCC's Dirk Van Gorp, who has worked in Zimbabwe for many years. "It had a vibrant and growing economy, the best educational system in Africa, was an agricultural paradise exporting food to other African nations, and enjoyed a peaceful and advanced civil society with freedom of the press and a multi-party democracy." Today, however, Zimbabwe is on the brink of collapse brought on by many factors, primary among them a repressive political regime, rampant HIV Aids

(20% of the adult population is HIV positive or living with AIDs), and naturally occurring drought. Inflation runs at 4% per day, or about 1,500% per year.

Because the country's entire economic and social structure is in chaos, Zimbabwe is in desperate need of many types of assistance—chief of all medical aid. The supplies provided by IOCC, which will help an estimated 30,000 individuals, include hospital consumables, surgical instruments, lab supplies and broad spectrum antibiotics used to treat AIDS and other infectious diseases. The supplies arrived on July 1 at the Luisa Guidotti Hospital in Motoko, and will be distributed to three other medical centers: St. Michael's Mission Hospital in Ngezi, the G. Spagnoli Health Centre for Health and Promotion of Women in Harare, and Nyamayaro Health Centre in Chinhoyi.

"There are very few well functioning hospitals

in Zimbabwe," said IOCC's Frank Carlin. "Individuals travel as far as 180 kilometers to receive medical help at Luisa Guidotti," he said. Dr. Carlo Spagnoli, head surgeon and medical director of Luisa Guidotti, offered his thanks to IOCC: "Blessed be you and the friends of the Orthodox Church in [the] USA for all these precious cartons of medicines and [equipment]. Zimbabwe is among the poorest and most fragile of countries in Africa, and we are grateful for this help."

The acquisition of the supplies and their transport was made possible through a grant from Roberto Bazzoni Onlus, a non profit association based in Italy. Northwest Medical Teams International provided the supplies.

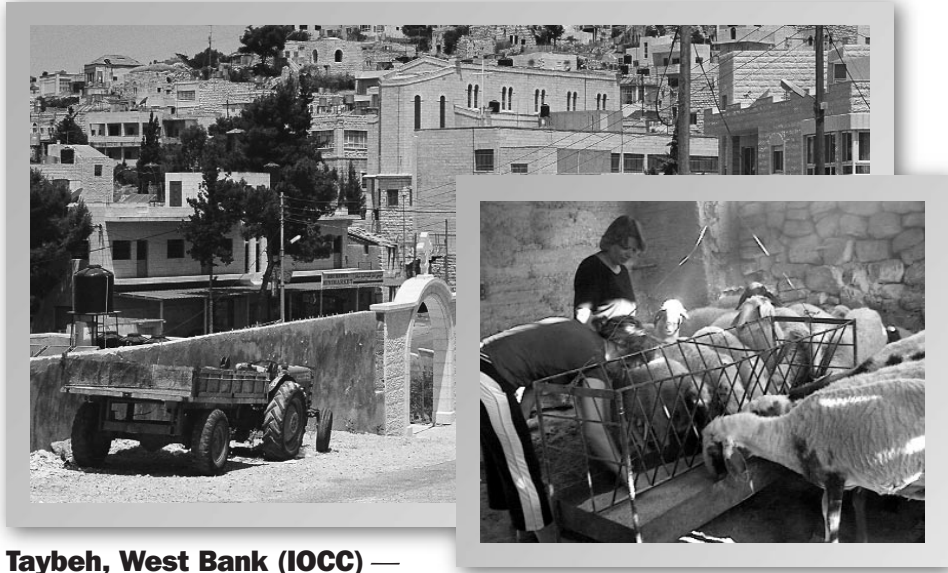
"This shipment represents IOCC's commitment to expanding our programs in Africa and to providing special assistance to rural populations," said IOCC Executive Director and CEO, Constantine M. Triantafilou. "Although this is our first project in Zimbabwe, we look forward to future collaborations with His Eminence Metropolitan George of Zimbabwe, who operates a medical clinic in his archdiocese and is planning a hospital in the future."



Carlo Spagnoli M.D.

# Taking the Initiative at Taybeh

## West Bank Women's Cooperative Branches Out from Honey to Sheep



Azzam Shabib

### Taybeh, West Bank (IOCC) —

“The women of Taybeh were marginalized, and not involved at all in the economic development of the village,” says Abeer Khourieh, the head of a cooperative for women in the blue-collar West Bank village of Taybeh. But what a difference a few years and an IOCC Jerusalem program can make. Not only have the women in Taybeh learned skills and become financially self-supporting through the IOCC honey-production program begun in 2003, on their own initiative they have branched out into other businesses and are even marketing their products.

Taybeh, a scenic village in the olive grove hills north of Jerusalem and Ramallah, is considered the last all-Christian village in the West Bank. But Taybeh residents are under the same curfews, closures, roadblocks and checkpoints that make life for all West Bank villagers an every day endurance test.

Nine Taybeh women were trained in honey production in 2003, which they mastered so well that they became trainers and equippers of other women in other villages. The honey produc-

tion project was just one part of IOCC's integrated program for Taybeh, which also addressed education and the needs of children by repairing and expanding the village's Orthodox school and building and equipping a library and computer center. The library and computer center were funded

by Hellenic Aid and the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In 2005, the Taybeh women formed and registered a cooperative for development and immediately began seeking opportunities to expand their business. Through a private donation, the cooperative purchased 19 sheep this past summer. The women will make and market their own cheese and *labneh* (Middle Eastern yogurt). They women are also branching out into horticulture, with plans to grow chamomile, mint and *zataar* (thyme). They have plans to break into the European market. “Just as in the honey production, the women had to be trained in the agricultural work,” says Nora Kort, IOCC Head of Office for Jerusalem/West Bank. “But I am sure that they will not only be successful, they will do what women always do when they learn a skill, and that is to teach others, spreading knowledge and hope.”



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