



IOCC is meeting the immediate needs of earthquake survivors in Syria and Turkey, alongside partners.

(Photos: GOPA-DERD)



Emergency Earthquake Relief Underway

IOCC Also Planning for Long-Term Aid

The devastating earthquakes that struck Syria and Turkey in February took the lives of tens of thousands of men, women, and children. They also destroyed vital infrastructure and resources, including hospitals.

IOCC has worked in Syria since 2002 and has built strong local partnerships. IOCC leveraged those relationships to quickly help survivors in the disaster's early days — contacting partners in the affected regions to assess needs and determine the most effective response.



An IOCC assessment team in Syria spoke with survivors. One shared, “I am desperate; I don’t know what to do.” Others asked for food and shelter. IOCC’s current focus is on meeting people’s most urgent needs—bedding, hygiene supplies, food, and shelter, plus medical and psychosocial care.

IOCC is also working with local aid organizations in Turkey, and early response includes providing grocery vouchers so survivors can purchase the basics they need, when they need them. In the coming weeks and months, IOCC will work toward developing longer-term programs to help people in Syria and Turkey as they begin to rebuild their lives and communities.

For the latest details on IOCC’s earthquake relief, visit iocc.org/latest.

FROM THE
EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR

Christ is risen!

As we celebrate Pascha and the miracle of Christ's resurrection, we are also mindful of all those in need around the world – and of Christ's call to His people to meet their human needs.

The devastating earthquakes in Syria and Turkey left thousands in need of the most basic aid, from shelter and clothing to food and water. Thank you for your generous response, which has enabled IOCC to provide immediate relief while we also look ahead to longer-term needs. An update on these efforts is included in this issue of *News & Needs*.

In this issue you will also read about how IOCC is working with Church partners in Montenegro and Lebanon, for example, to improve facilities that bring vital food to their communities. These partnerships create lasting impact by equipping the Church to continue its work of service in Christ's name.

As always, we are grateful for your generosity. In this holy season and year round, your gifts are truly bringing love and hope to those in great need.

Yours in the risen Christ,

Constantine M. Triantafilou
Executive Director & CEO

Reenergizing Vital Work in Lebanon

Solar-Powered System Revives a Charity Kitchen

Over the past few years, Lebanon's economic crisis has only deepened. Exacerbated by the pandemic and the explosion in Beirut in 2020, Lebanon faces continuing currency depreciation, frequent electrical cuts, and rising fuel costs.

The electricity cuts were particularly problematic at a charity kitchen in the town of Mansourieh, in Mount Lebanon. In July 2020, the Orthodox Youth Movement at St. Mary Orthodox Church opened a charity kitchen, which with the support of the parish and volunteers prepares and distributes hot meals to people in need across the surrounding neighborhoods.

Solar panels provide a consistent power source despite the frequent blackouts and high fuel costs affecting Lebanon.



Correction: In the last issue of *News & Needs*, the name of IOCC's Church partner in Syria was misprinted. The correct name is the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East, Department of Ecumenical Relations and Development. We deeply regret the error.

Reliable solar-powered energy for this Church-run kitchen in Lebanon enables volunteers to continue critical meal delivery to 130 families each week.



However, as long blackouts became common and the price of diesel fuel for generators increased, despite everyone's best efforts, by 2021 the kitchen could no longer afford to operate.

Thankfully, an IOCC program revitalized the kitchen by installing a solar-energy system that provides continuous power for cooking and safer food storage. IOCC also helped to repair the kitchen and install new equipment. The initiative was developed in close coordination with His Eminence Metropolitan Silouan Moussi of Mount Lebanon, who provided valuable input and blessed this work.

Now, volunteers are serving 130 families per week, preparing hot meals and bread for people like 74-year-old Josephine. She visits St. Mary's every Thursday, getting food for herself, her sick husband, and her chronically ill 42-year-old daughter.

Josephine, who suffers from high blood pressure and kidney problems, deeply appreciates the meals she receives. "Food has become so expensive," Josephine said. "At least my husband and I can secure food for two days [each week]. It helps us in this difficult time."

While parishioners help cover the cost of ingredients, IOCC's assistance revived the kitchen. As St. Mary's priest, Fr. Younes, said, without help from IOCC, "It would have been impossible to cook and operate." Today, with its new solar-powered system, the kitchen is again giving food—and hope—to the people of Mansourieh and nearby neighborhoods in Mount Lebanon.



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International Orthodox Christian Charities, Inc. (IOCC), is the official humanitarian relief and development agency of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America.

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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Nourishing Bodies and Souls in Montenegro

Major Improvements to a Church Humanitarian Kitchen

Working with the Serbian Orthodox Metropolitanate of Montenegro and the Littoral in Podgorica, Montenegro, IOCC is helping to grow the Church's humanitarian kitchen facility.

As part of a larger Church initiative, the kitchen prepares and delivers over 350 cooked meals a day, improving food security and the well-being of local people in need. The IOCC program included renovating the space, increasing its electrical capacity, and providing new, upgraded appliances. Among them are a large, multifunctional industrial oven, a large deep freezer, and an industrial meat grinder.

IOCC also provided smaller kitchen equipment such as vegetable slicers, metal bowls, baking trays, and portable electric stoves. All this new equipment has improved working conditions



Renovations and new equipment have improved working conditions and efficiency for this Church-run soup kitchen in Montenegro.

and enabled the staff to prepare, cook, and store food more efficiently.

In addition, IOCC is helping the Church kitchen grow its own food by expanding the Church farm estate in Podgorica. New greenhouses provide a steady supply of vegetables at lower cost, and production has expanded to include field crops, egg production, and vegetable-processing facilities. Together, the renovated kitchen and the Church farm estate are helping the Orthodox Church serve more people in need throughout Montenegro.

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