



NEWS & NEEDS

INTERNATIONAL ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHARITIES

2024 | ISSUE 1



Meeting Urgent Needs in Gaza

Providing Relief and Planning for the Future

IOCC is providing aid including medicine, hygiene items, water, and food to people displaced by the conflict in the Holy Land.

IOCC has been active in the Middle East since the 1990s, working in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and across the Holy Land. The relationships and experience gained through the years are helping IOCC to determine the most effective ways to provide aid.

Since conflict began in October 2023, IOCC has remained in close communication with partners and staff on the ground. With strong protocols in place, the safety of IOCC staff and those we serve is the priority, and the goal is to continue relief programs as it is safe to do so.

So far, in Gaza, IOCC has already provided aid including emergency water, food, and hygiene items for people sheltering in church buildings, and baby formula, potable water, and diapers

for families with infants. IOCC has also supplied fresh meat and produce as available, plus shelf-stable food staples like flour and cooking oil, as well as disposable plates, utensils, and cups. Hot daily meals provide additional nourishment amid tremendous hardship, and medicine for displaced people with chronic conditions is helping them manage diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart conditions.

The impacts of this conflict will be deeply felt and long-lasting. Long-term needs will include rebuilding and providing emotional and spiritual care. IOCC remains committed to humanitarian work in Gaza and across the Holy Land, to our staff there, and especially to the thousands of people already helped by IOCC's long-term work in the region.

FROM THE
EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR

Dear friends,

Once again, we have celebrated Christ's Nativity and we are reminded of the beautiful light of hope that streamed from the miraculous star at His birth. As a new calendar year begins, it is my prayer that we let that light and hope stay with us and that God will grant peace to Gaza, Ukraine, Syria, and our world.

In Ukraine, the Middle East, and other places around the world, IOCC is bringing hope and help in Christ's name to our brothers and sisters in their time of need. Even something as simple as a hot meal or basics like rice and cooking oil can bring profound relief. This is the work you make possible.

This issue of *News & Needs* will update you on IOCC's efforts in the Middle East, our work to increase food security in Greece, as well as our progress in the fight against pododermatitis in Ethiopia. In each case, you will see the power of our collective faith in action.

I wish you a happy and blessed new year and look forward to sharing more stories in 2024 of the work your generosity makes possible.

Yours in Christ,

Constantine M. Triantafilou
Executive Director & CEO

Rising above Adversity to Rebuild

Improving Food Security in Greece

IOCC's humanitarian work has spanned operations in more than 60 countries. A core sector of that work is improving food security for struggling families—and Greece is one of the places where IOCC is currently focusing its efforts.

The long-lasting effects of Greece's economic crisis, along with increased food costs because of the conflict in Ukraine, and the wildfires and catastrophic flooding last summer across central Greece have all drastically impacted already strained budgets. Even families with reliable incomes are having trouble affording staple food items.

IOCC provided hot meals and basic services for people affected by last summer's flooding. Many lost everything: their homes, their farms, and their businesses. IOCC is working to help families in flood-affected Central Greece and throughout the entire country—like Sotiria's.

Sotiria is the mother of four children between the ages of 3 and 11. Though she is a trained pediatric nurse, Sotiria was unemployed for many years and just recently began a new job as a school nurse. Her family is one of over 200 that receive a monthly parcel of dry food staples provided by IOCC and partner organization Apostoli and distributed through a parish in central Athens.

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

IOCC, in the spirit of Christ's love, offers emergency relief and development projects worldwide, without discrimination, and strengthens the capacity of the Orthodox

YOUR IMPACT IN 2023

By the Numbers

5 CORE SECTORS

- Emergency preparedness and response
- Water, sanitation, and hygiene
- Sustainable livelihoods
- Food security and agriculture
- Health

16 KEY LOCATIONS

- Armenia
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Ethiopia
- Georgia
- Greece
- Haiti
- Holy Land
- Jordan
- Lebanon
- Poland
- Romania
- Serbia including Kosovo
- Syria
- Uganda
- Ukraine
- US

EMERGENCY RELIEF SNAPSHOTS

Ukraine
response:

78,000+

people
helped

Middle East
response:

411,600+

people
helped

Ethiopia
response:

84,000+

people
helped

OVER A DOZEN SUPPLY CONTAINERS SHIPPED

- Medical supplies
- School kits
- Hygiene kits
- Blankets
- Mattresses



40' long containers with 27 pallets hold tens of thousands of items totaling over \$9.6 million worth of goods in 2023.



Sotiria receives a monthly food parcel that helps her to meet the basic nutritional needs of her four children.

"The needs with four children are so many," Sotiria said, "and the food parcel helps my family meet our basic nutritional needs. I'm grateful for your support, as it's the only help I receive. I pray God blesses your work as you help so many people."

For families like Sotiria's and many others across the world, IOCC remains committed to improving access to healthy and nutritious foods.

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ASSEMBLY OF CANONICAL
ORTHODOX BISHOPS
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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America.

programs to those in need
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Fighting Podoconiosis in Ethiopia

How a Teenage Girl Is Helping Lead the Way

"I had never heard of podo before," said Tena, a 17-year-old student in Amhara, Ethiopia.

Like Tena, many in the region know little about podoconiosis, or "podo." It's caused when silicates in the volcanic soil used for farming come into contact with bare feet and enter the lymphatic system. This debilitating disease is estimated to affect nearly half a million people in Ethiopia's Amhara region. Those with the condition suffer from extreme swelling of the feet and lower legs, accompanied by excruciating pain.

Tena participated in an IOCC-organized program on her school campus that included drama, music, and poems to educate and mobilize the school community on preventing and treating podo.

After the program, she shared, "Today I learned about the cause, prevention, and treatment of podo, and I'll teach my parents and family to keep their feet clean and wear shoes regularly. I'll also include podo as a discussion topic in our girls' club and share with other students by organizing events."



After attending an IOCC-organized program focused on the prevention and treatment of podo, Tena is sharing her knowledge with friends and family.

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Tena is one of many Ethiopians who, having learned the facts about podo, is committed to spreading the word in her community.

Since 2010, IOCC has been the only organization in the Amhara region educating communities about podo's causes and prevention and helping treat those who have the disease. Eleven IOCC-operated clinics have helped more than 300,000 afflicted or at-risk adults and children through either treatment or prevention.

The combination of community-centered education, prevention, and treatment is proving successful. IOCC is committed to ongoing work with researchers and communities and to remaining at the forefront of efforts to help people affected by podo.

