After the armed conflict in the Holy Land, the needs are immense

Last weekend, the CEO of the Latin Patriarchate, Sami El-Yousef, sent us a report on the situation of projects directly affected by the recent armed conflict in the Holy Land, particularly those supported by the Order:

In Gaza, all projects that were planned to be implemented now during the summer break will be affected since building materials will be in short supply. These include about five projects for the LPJ school and parish in Gaza funded by the Order including renovation works for the school hall; rehabilitation of the science labs; new computers for the computer labs, fixing structural damage at the parish hall; insulation of the roof for the Sisters convent; expansion of the balcony of the Sisters convent; and the installation of a pergola for the playground of the school.

We are also now concerned about our ability to transfer funds to Gaza for various humanitarian and job creation projects given that four banks were destroyed during the attacks and the availability of cash in the remaining Gaza banks becomes a serious challenge.

Also in Gaza the expansion project of the premises of the disabled children's home run by the Daughters of Charity there is now on hold and works will have to be delayed. This project is funded by the Archdiocese of Cologne and was supposed to be completed in June.

In the West Bank, given that our staff (as well as workers and contractors) have difficulty moving around as the roads are becoming hazardous with the continuous attacks by settlers, projects in Taybeh, Birzeit, Jifna, and Ein Areek will surely be affected and will take longer than expected to complete.

In Jerusalem, the project to insulate the roof at the Latin Patriarchate that was supposed to start now is on hold given that the contractor is from the West Bank and will surely have difficulties reaching Jerusalem for the time being. This may proceed as soon as the Jerusalem tensions subside.

As far as damages in Gaza are concerned, our initial assessment would force us to extend support to the following activities:

Help the Rosary Sisters find the resources to fix the major damages inflicted on the school, KG, and convent. This will be an expensive undertaking given the massive damage. Fix damages at the Holy Family parish, mostly at the present time to the solar panels on the roof that sustained damage from shrapnel.There are damages sustained at various levels to the apartments of dozens of Christian families in Gaza. Some minor, including broken windows and popped up doors, damaged water pipes and solar panels, while others include structural damages, furniture, and appliances.

Potentially, we need to help some Christian families whose homes became uninhabitable rent apartments, maybe for a period of one year.Provide humanitarian support to those who lost their jobs and may have lost businesses, until they rebuild their lives. Provide trauma support in the form of psychosocial programs for all age groups to help people gain some sanity after the torturous eleven days of 24/7 bombardment.

This is merely an initial list and I am working with Fr. Gabriel in Gaza to more accurately assess needs so that in the upcoming days we know what we need to concentrate on and have some financial costs.

I hope you can start to prepare members that the needs are great and if they wish to support, we will have to find the proper means (certainly in coordination and with the approval of the Governor General, assisted by his team at the Grand Magisterium of the Order).

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