

# **SYRIA TODAY...**

**April 1, 2021**

The Syrian war is not only one of the bloodiest conflicts in the world, it's also one of the most complex. Now in its 10<sup>th</sup> year, the Syrian conflict has led to more than 500,000 deaths and displaced an estimated 13 million—over half of Syria's pre-war population. Over 6.2 million Syrians are internally displaced, and 5.6 million are refugees.





In the tenth year of the crisis, the humanitarian needs in Syria remained staggering in terms of scale, severity and complexity. Tensions across northeast Syria remained high between the Self-Administration's security forces and the Government's official forces, with isolated yet regular attacks recorded in southern Al-Hasakeh, Ar-Raqqa, and Deir-ez-Zor governorates. Unfortunately Syria faces enormous challenges, well beyond the rebuilding of infrastructure and housing. It will also need assistance to restart its economy, stabilize its currency and renew its public services, in particular education, health, electricity and water.





The current situation in Syria is untenable. People starve and die. Children are extremely malnourished, because food has become unaffordable. People stand in line for hours for a loaf of bread. Food prices have risen by 300 percent in the past year. The economic situation is causing a famine. For many families, livelihoods have become unaffordable. Unfortunately, people have reduced the number of meals from three to two a day. Or it stays with just one meal.



The fuel shortage crisis worsened further in Syria in early 2021, limiting Syria's access to fuel and reducing fuel supply in markets. Unilateral coercive measures on the country and the weakening of the Syrian pound are believed to be key drivers of the fuel shortage/ limited access to fuel. Moreover, the Central Bureau of Statistics of Syria reported an average inflation rate of 200 percent in 2020 compared to 2019, with goods inflation reaching 300 percent. The food security situation in Syria has also worsened over the past year, with 12.4 million people estimated to be food insecure in 2020. This represents an increase of 4.5 million people (57 percent) compared to 2019, including twice as many severely food insecure people (1.3 million people). Electricity is another major issue. Only two hours of electricity are provided by the government during the day.







All social structures have disappeared in recent years as half the population has fled. We as a church are trying to fill the gap of lost family.

Before the civil war, Syria had a healthy economy and a large, stable middle class. Today at least 137,000 Syrian children under the age of five suffer from acute malnutrition. In addition, one in eight children has a growth delay. As much as the people of Syria are eager to rebuild their country, right now the economy is being strangled and people have entered the survival mode.

The economic sanctions imposed by the US and the European Union on Syria have brought the economy to a standstill, but the European Union indicates that it will always provide humanitarian aid and points to Assad. This sometimes makes it almost impossible for aid organizations to reach the people who need help. There must be a dramatic change to turn the tide, because everything we as a church do here is a drop in the ocean. Social immorality issues have increased because of extreme poverty.

The Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated the existing crisis. Covid-19 is a big problem, mainly because health care is almost gone after nearly a

decade of war. In 2021, the COVID-19 continued to spread across Syria. The total COVID-19 cases confirmed by the Health Minister in government-held areas of Syria has reached up to 18,498 until now, of which 12,377 cases have recovered, while 1,239 have passed away. Meanwhile, the Syrian Council of Ministers approved Syria's participation in the COVAX vaccine program and started preparing vaccine deployment plans with the World Health Organization, which target priority populations in three phases and seek to immunize initially around 4.5 million Syrians nationwide by the second half of 2021.









Therefore, after ten brutal years of war, the Aleppo population once again remains defenseless in its ability to resist the spread of the pandemic.

In these disturbing days, as the Armenian Protestant Community in Syria, we raised our precautionary measures to eliminate the anxiety, panic, and worry in the community and protected the vulnerable against the virus through “Bethel” Polyclinic healthcare center.









Finally, we believe that God has a plan for our country. We rely on his wisdom, goodness, love and sovereignty. That gives us strength to stay here and keep going.

**Prayerfully,**  
**Rev. Haroutune Selimian, Ph.D.**  
**President**  
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Handwritten signature of Rev. Haroutune Selimian.

