



Syria

Number of projects

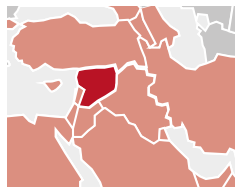
124 118

Type of projects

20 1 4
54 1 0
0 6 32

Head of Section

Reinhard Backes



Syrian Christians have suffered greatly from the effects of the civil war.

Today, it is estimated that only one third of the 1.5 million Christians who lived in Syria before the war remain. In Aleppo, the numbers are even more dramatic. According to the local churches, there were about 180,000 Christians there before the war. Of these, no more than

30,000 remain. For ACN, one of the most important tasks is therefore to encourage Christians in the region once again to seek a viable future in their homeland.

On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the beginning of the war, ACN presented a report documenting the aid provided until that point. The conclusion: Between March 2011 and March 2021, our aid organisation provided 41.8 million euros for Syria. Of this, more than 33 million euros were

The Greek Melkite Church of St George in Maaloula, damaged by the Al-Nusra terrorist organisation.



Houses destroyed by fighting in Maaloula.

A Christmas performance in Aleppo.



spent on aid projects in the areas of subsistence, medical care and hygiene, food, clothing and education. In coordination with the local churches, a total of 418 initiatives benefited the residents of the cities most affected by the war, including Aleppo, Homs, Damascus, Marmarita and Tartus, where most Syrian Christians live.

Despite the many aid projects, the civilian population in Syria continues to suffer great hardship ten years after the war began. The continuing economic sanctions, for example, affect ordinary people in particular. They often have to queue for hours for food or heating oil – frequently without success. Many cannot heat their homes. The energy supply is still severely restricted; power cuts of twelve hours per

day are not uncommon. Due to the foreign currency restrictions, people are also no longer able to take out loans. “The sanctions have no other consequence than to plunge people further into suffering and misery,” complain ACN project partners. Added to this are the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, which have further increased hardships. Many Christians live on less than one dollar a day.

At the rebuilt St Vincent de Paul Retirement Home in Aleppo.



« Help is still needed so that the Christian Church in Syria is not bled dry. »



After a Holy Mass in Homs.



Christians in Syria belong to different denominations. In addition to various Catholic rites, there are also several Orthodox churches. Most of our aid projects here benefit Christians of all denominations, including the Greek Orthodox and Syrian Orthodox Archdioceses, as well as the Armenian Apostolic Church in Aleppo. Our project aid is as varied as the needs of the people in this war-torn country. In the year under review, it included

food programmes for the elderly, the provision of fuel for the heating of a dormitory for female students and medication assistance, as well as subsidies for the daily living costs of families and many other initiatives, including scholarships for students.

In addition, with our help, 30,000 sets of clothing (one pair of jeans and one shirt or blouse each) were distributed to needy children in Aleppo,

Distribution of anoraks to children and young people in Damascus.



During the Easter celebration
of the Jesuits in Homs.



Thanksgiving service in Homs
for ACN and its benefactors.

Damascus, Homs and other cities at Christmas. The clothes were made directly in garment factories in Aleppo thanks to the initiative of Sister Annie Demerjian, a long-time project partner of ACN. These large orders have given many people the opportunity to earn a living for their families for several months in the midst of high unemployment and poor economic conditions.

**« Syria is like a person who
needs to recover after a
serious operation. »**

Sister Annie
Demerjian



Impressions
from Aleppo.



A large number of elderly Syrians have been left behind alone because the young see no future for themselves in their homeland. Many of them have already left the country or

are planning to emigrate. But without young families, the country has no future. Among our many aid projects, one special project therefore aims at supporting young married couples.

Retirement home in Aleppo.





Praying the rosary at the Church of Our Lady of the Annunciation in Aleppo.

« The bishops are particularly concerned about young people in Syria. »

They received one-time financial support to rent and furnish a home, as many young couples do not get married in the first place and put off starting a family for years because they simply cannot afford to furnish a flat. In the year under review, ACN was able to support a total of 152 young married couples in renting and furnishing their first flat together.



ACN sponsors the Christian Hope Centre in Damascus

The newly founded Christian Hope Centre in Damascus is a micro-credit initiative set up by the Catholic Church and young Syrians. Under the programme, families receive financial aid to start their own businesses or resume professional projects that

were interrupted during the war years. The new centre in the capital Damascus is under the spiritual direction of the Latin Bishop of Syria, Monseigneur Georges Abou Khazen. ACN is pleased to be among the first supporters of the new centre.

A displaced married couple in Aleppo.