

Partnership for Global Justice: June Alert

Two million Iraqis have left the country and another two million have been displaced and have settled in other parts of the country. This is one sixth of the entire population of the country who have left their homes since the war in Iraq began in 2003. Those who have left Iraq have had great difficulty in finding shelter, healthcare and jobs. The refugees are in great need. It has been declared that this is the worst humanitarian crisis in the Middle East since 1948.

The Good Shepherd Sisters are involved in services to urban refugees in Damascus, Syria caring for 1500 Iraqis. According to Sister Claude Naddaf, one of the administrators of the camp recently visiting the UN, one of the greatest needs is for medical care. Some of the women are pregnant or have recently given birth, some are elderly suffering from diseases, and some of the children have had serious injuries suffered from bullets and bombs. The deeper need is the psychological trauma that the Iraqis have experienced from the violent attacks in their neighborhoods. Additionally, there is a vulnerability to trafficking with foreigners promising “situations in Italy.” Women are quite desperate and this offer seems like an alternative to their current dire reality.

The Sisters are assisting in finding jobs for the adults, hosting a summer camp for the children, and providing shelter for families. They have developed a holistic program to care for the needs of those refugees, both Muslims and Christians, who come to them asking for assistance.

This Good Shepherd ministry is in urgent need of financial assistance.

Action:

Please consider a donation to the Good Shepherd Mission in Damascus, Syria for the Iraqi Refugees.

Donations can be routed through New York from where they will be gathered and sent directly to Syria for direct services. Send donations to:

Clare Nolan, RGS
UN Office of the Good Shepherd Sisters
211 East 43rd Street, Suite 302
New York, NY 10017

Checks can be made to the Sisters of the Good Shepherd.

Background Information:

-Widows who have lost their husbands have been subjected to forced displacement by certain militias in Baghdad.

-The high cost of living in Syria is a great difficulty for the Iraqis. One room apartments range between 10,000-15,000 Syrian pounds per month, which is about \$200-\$300 USD.

-Iraqis now living in Syria must leave every three months and renew their visas.

-Many of the children cannot cope with their new situation. While these children are allowed in the Syrian school system, many of them have left school because of the lack of ability to adapt to all the changes.

-A number of children need to work to assist with the difficult economic situation of their families. They sometimes work in unhealthy conditions and are exposed to diseases.

-The Iraqis who are sick are having a very difficult time finding appropriate medical care and the money to pay for their medicine.

-Women are often separated from their husbands and are coping alone to raise and support their children.

For more information:

International Rescue Committee: www.theIRC.org

World Refugee Day, is June 20th. Find promotional materials (posters, pamphlets, etc) at [www. UNHCR.org](http://www.UNHCR.org)

Pentecost Prayer for Peace: www.domlife.org

New YorkTimes, May 29, 2007 see attachment with this alert.