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Mercy-USA News

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Idlib Crisis

According to the latest United Nations reports, at least 960,000 people have been displaced in northwest Syria since December. In late February 2020, UN Humanitarian Coordinator Mark Lowcock reported, “almost 50,000

people are sheltering under trees or other open spaces, no where is safe...I am getting daily reports of babies and other young children dying in the cold. Imagine the grief of a parent who escaped a warzone with their child, only to watch that child freeze to death.” *Continued...*

Mercy-USA for Aid and Development

is a nonprofit relief and development organization dedicated to alleviating human suffering and supporting individuals and their communities in their efforts to become more self-sufficient.

Incorporated in 1988, Mercy-USA's projects focus on improving health, nutrition and access to safe water, as well as promoting economic and educational growth around the world.

- Registered with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
- Special Consultative Status with the United Nations
- Member of InterAction

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Fleeing Death in Idlib

Continued from page 1... Some of our senior field staff who have been with us since the war began are reporting worsening conditions in real time. One senior field team manager told us as he was preparing his family to evacuate Idlib, *"This is worse than the siege on Aleppo because this time there is nowhere left for us to go."*

Since 2013, Mercy-USA for Aid and Development has had teams inside Syria providing humanitarian aid to children and their families.

Because of our consistent and effective implementation of large food basket distributions over these years, we're pleased to announce our number of families served with nutritious food has increased exponentially. Through generous grants and in partnership with the World Food Program, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the International Organization for Migration, we have been able to scale up this project and serve more than 230,000 people in northern Syria with food baskets. Many families have told us that our food baskets are all that they have to survive each month.

Growing up, getting married and raising a family in an IDP Camp

Just barely out of their teens, Alaa and his wife, Jinan are raising two toddlers in a camp in the northern part of Idlib province Syria. They both fled their village outside of Hama with their families eight years ago. "I don't have many good memories of

our life there; we left when I was only 12 and most of my recollections are of terror," Jinan told us. "I can't forget the horrible sounds of rockets hitting buildings; the bricks flying around us; the sounds of shattered glass, and the people crying out for help."



Their camp, near the Turkish border was chosen with the thought that it would be safer. But for the last eight years, the two grew into adulthood knowing only fear, hardship and hunger. They met and married in the camp and are raising a daughter and son, two and three years old.

Alaa told us that each day it becomes more difficult to find work to support his young family. He doesn't speak of the future beyond what he needs to protect and feed his little ones. With generous support from the World Food Program, Mercy-USA is now delivering a nutritious monthly food basket to Alaa's family and tens of thousands like them to ensure they survive to see an end to this devastating war.

Since December 1, 2019:

1,800,000 children in need of humanitarian aid.

4 out of 5 displaced are women and children.

960,000 people newly displaced.

2.6 million people displaced in Idlib overall.

The donation of clean water is a sustainable gift that positively impacts an entire community for generations to come.

Women and children benefit the most when they have nearby safe access to clean water. No long and dangerous treks for water that is often unfit to drink. Girls can attend school, women can focus on their own development instead of spending hours each day searching for water to keep their families alive another day.



Mercy-USA provides clean water for hundreds of thousands in Somalia

Each year, Mercy-USA donors support the building of clean water wells in Somalia where climate change has already had a devastating impact on the people. Years of drought have destroyed the livelihood of millions who are traditionally pastoralists. Other parts of the country have recently been impacted severely by flash flooding. These climate extremes put this already vulnerable population at risk for further catastrophe.

Mercy-USA has had water, sanitation and hygiene

programs to help families stay healthy in difficult circumstances for many years in Somalia. The cornerstone of this work is our safe water project. We have built or repaired close to 700 wells which has left a positive impact on communities with combined populations of over 750,000 people.

Access to clean water that is not used to water animals or wash clothing is a vital way to help communities stay healthy and strong.

Anab's Story in Somalia



go wash them near the dam. It was easier for us, but because our village used the water from the dam to do everything, including watering the livestock, two of my grandchildren fell sick with fever and diarrhea. I think it was the water. We had to walk to the Mercy-USA health center for treatment.

The new well in my village means that my grandchildren will not miss school, they will be healthy and their thoughts will not just revolve around fetching water. This clean water well is transforming the lives of people in my community."

Anab, a 60 year old grandmother told us, "I live with seven grandchildren and that means more water usage in our household. Last year was the driest, and we would walk more than 4 miles in search of water and pasture. Fortunately, toward the end of the year, the rains came. We tried to save up as much as we could in our storage tanks and jerry cans but in no time it was gone. We then had to rely on the seasonal dam that still had water for part of the year. On average we would hike to the dam 5 to 6 times a day."

"My grandchildren were missing a lot of school, their days started and ended at the dam just fetching water. At times, we had to carry our clothes and dishes to



COVID-19 Response Ramping Up to Protect the Vulnerable



Iftar baskets in nine countries feed vulnerable families

There's no telling how severe the impact on vulnerable communities will be from the COVID-19 Pandemic by the time Ramadan arrives around April 23rd, but Mercy-USA will be offering Iftar food baskets to needy families in nine countries including, Syria, Lebanon, Bangladesh to Rohingya Refugees, Yemen, Albania, Bosnia, Kenya and Somalia.

In years past, in some countries we have provided hot meals to families, but in our planning we have decided

that a nutritious food basket to feed the entire family for the month will be safer for all. They will be provided in a safe distribution process to eliminate the need for daily shopping or gathering in big groups as is customary.

It will be a difficult time for Muslims this year during Ramadan as it is normally a time of community and celebration; however, protecting the health of vulnerable populations will be a priority for all communities around the world.

WASH takes on a whole new meaning in the time of COVID-19

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, known as WASH in the world of humanitarian relief has been a priority in our work since its beginning. The COVID-19 pandemic has made this outreach more urgent. Protecting already health compromised refugees, internally displaced persons and the needy—all for whom everyday sanitation, access to clean water, and the ability to practice social distancing may be virtually impossible—our teams are doing everything they can to mitigate the spread of the disease.

Our first response includes the following:

- Protecting our field staff so that they are able to continue to deliver vital relief to vulnerable families as well as preventing the spread of the virus
- Providing pamphlets and posters translated into the local language that explain how the COVID-19 virus is spread and how families can protect themselves and their neighbors.
- Providing hand washing stations in IDP camps and at our health facilities
- Distribution of hygiene kits to vulnerable communities



Where We Work • mercyusa.org



Albania

English and computer skills training for orphans
Read to Succeed program for school-age children and teens



Rohingya Refugees

Food baskets for Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh



Bosnia and Herzegovina

Vocational and career training for orphans, at-risk teens and young adults
Agriculture Education Center to aid farmers, and local communities with sustainable farming methods



Somalia

To date about 700 new or rehabilitated wells for access to clean drinking water throughout Somalia including emergency drought relief
Nutritional support and health services for mothers and children
Hygiene and sanitation training and promotion
Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention
Support for primary & middle schools



The Gaza Strip

With grant funding to UNRWA, support for a special school for blind and visually-impaired elementary school-aged children.



India

Seasonal food aid



Syria

Monthly food baskets for over 200,000 vulnerable persons in northern Syria
Winterization projects for vulnerable children and their families
Shelter, blankets, mattresses, mats for displaced families
Nutritional support and health services
Hygiene and sanitation training and promotion



Indonesia

Aiding farmers and local communities with sustainable farming methods. Also assisting farmers in forming cooperatives.



United States

Seasonal food aid
Support for refugees
Support for Detroit area homeless shelters
School backpack program for disadvantaged students



Kenya

Seasonal food aid



Lebanon

Syrian Refugee assistance in Wadi Khalid, Lebanon
Palestinian Refugee Assistance in Beddawi and Nahr-Al-Bared Palestinian Refugee Camps



Yemen

Food baskets for displaced persons in Yemen



Pakistan

With funding to implementing partner, The Citizens Foundation (TCF) building a secondary school in Sindh Province



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