

REFUGEE SITUATION IN LEBANON STILL CRITICAL

In its sixth year, the war in Syria does not seem to be resolved soon. This is the tragic situation faced by the Syrian refugees in the Lebanon. Already their number has exceeded the 2 million mark. Beside them the country must also cope with half a million Palestinian refugees with a total of indigenous population of less than 4 million and a surface area comparable to the Austrian province of the Tyrol. Unimaginable for us Europeans!

Suffering, neediness, helplessness and exhaustion characterize the everyday life of the refugees. Especially in wintertime their life becomes almost unbearable. Storms, rain- and snowfall seriously impair the infrastructure such as electricity, water supply and telecommunications.

The makeshift housing accommodations are hopelessly flooded or collapse under the heavy snow. There are no dry premises where one can move to. Cold weather and humidity cause a lot of illnesses and medical care is cruelly insufficient. The newly born and pregnant women particularly suffer from all this.

We are permanently in contact with people in Beirut and the *Bekaa Valley*. We see and feel the despair, the deception and the hopelessness and also the resignation of the refugees. How can one give hope to these people? By telling them that we shall come again and help a few hundred? Sometimes we feel helpless too.

Only those who have once been on the run themselves, who have felt hunger and thirst, have felt cold, were roofless and anguished, can really feel the traumatizing effect of such a situation.

So we carry on trying to convince people to support our humanitarian work of helping Syrian refugees in the Lebanon. It's the children who need our attention most, since they represent the future. That's why it has been our main objective to enable children to go to school. And the families are provided with every-day essentials.

We thank all the helpers very much indeed!

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Vienna, February 2017