



CNEWA

IN THE
MIDDLE EAST



Our Response to
Christians in Need



SYRIA

LEBANON

ISRAEL

PALESTINE

JORDAN

IRAQ

EGYPT



In the last several decades, the Middle East has faced a deep and at times violent transformation. While no one has been spared, these upheavals threaten the very existence of Christian and other vulnerable communities. Pope Francis has made peace a pillar of his papacy, particularly peace for the Middle East. He has said, “We must not resign ourselves to thinking of a Middle East without Christians,” urging Catholics and all people of goodwill to pray and work for peace.

This booklet is designed to give readers a brief overview, by country, of the events that have impacted Christians and how CNEWA is responding to the needs of the local churches for the years 2014, 2015 and 2016.

90 YEARS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Pope Pius XI founded Catholic Near East Welfare Association (CNEWA) in 1926 to accompany the Catholic Eastern churches and to bolster their pastoral and humanitarian endeavours in a time of great turmoil.

CNEWA has remained firm in standing with the churches of the Middle East, through the invasion of Iraq in 2003; Israel’s war with Hezbollah in Lebanon in 2006; the Israel-Hamas conflicts in Gaza; the rise of the Arab Spring in late 2010; and the tsunami of wars, conflict and persecution that have since followed. Over the years, CNEWA has intensified its presence in the Middle East, through its offices in Amman, Beirut and Jerusalem, to meet the needs of the church in her quest to witness to the Gospel of Jesus.

Thanks to the support of the Canadian Catholic Bishops and Catholics throughout Canada, CNEWA’s national office in Canada reaches hundreds of thousands affected by violence, poverty and discrimination not just in the Middle East, but throughout the lands of the Eastern churches, including India, Northeast Africa and Eastern Europe, particularly in Ukraine.

CNEWA’S PROGRAMS

\$ TOTALS FOR THE MIDDLE EAST (2014-16)

\$33,252,248*

**Note: More detailed numbers are available on page 11.*

OVERVIEW

Egypt has been on a violent roller coaster since 2010, beginning with the Arab Spring, the toppling of Hosni Mubarak, the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood, the military coup that followed, and the return of authoritarian “stability.” Civil unrest — including high-profile attacks on Christians — and economic and social deterioration have added to a growing undercurrent of unease and fear.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

The violence and unrest have kept visitors at bay, decimating the once-thriving tourism industry. The plummeting value of the Egyptian pound, along with inflation, has exacerbated the pain for the people of Egypt. After years of delay, the government has begun to implement some economic reforms, recently securing a \$12 billion loan from the International Monetary Fund.

IMPACT ON CHRISTIANS

Egypt’s Christians make up 10 percent of the country’s 94 million people — the largest Christian community in the Middle East — yet for decades they were treated as second-class citizens.

Attacks against Christians have surged since the Arab Spring demonstrations. The Palm Sunday 2017 attacks in northern Egypt, which killed more than 45 worshippers and injured more than a hundred, as well as the May attacks at a monastery near Minya, killing at least 28, underscore the uncertainty and violence Christians in Egypt live with every day. It is believed tens of thousands of Coptic Christians have left Egypt since 2011.

CNEWA’S PRESENCE

CNEWA’s primary partner in Egypt, the Coptic Catholic Church, is a small community numbering fewer than 175,000 souls. Yet its outreach, in ministering to the needs of Egypt’s Christians and Muslims, is significant. Parishes and eparchies sponsor clinics and dispensaries, child care initiatives, schools and programs for those with special needs, especially the blind. We support pastoral centres of seven Coptic Catholic eparchies, as well as those operated by the Coptic Orthodox Church. CNEWA also helps with the formation of seminarians, novices and lay people — and, significantly, supports a number of initiatives aimed at building bridges among Christians in Egypt.



For decades, CNEWA has worked with Egypt’s Catholic and Coptic Orthodox churches to bridge the gap between the nation’s Christian and dominant Muslim communities. Support includes:

- **Activities focussing on the marginalized, including support for those with special needs, such as the Santa Lucia School for the Blind in Abou Kir; displaced families, including Eritrean and Sudanese refugees; and families who, uprooted from their villages and lacking education, settle illegally in Cairo’s suburbs and collect garbage**
- **The proper formation of priests at St. Leo’s Patriarchal Seminary and a number of congregations of men and women, including the Sisters of the Sacred Heart. Proper formation helps those charged with serving in difficult — even dangerous — environments take on these challenges with prayer and love**
- **Help for communities, such as the Coptic Orthodox Eparchy of Port Said, care for children from broken families**
- **Restoration of churches, schools and institutions and restarting of programs devastated by acts of violence**

OVERVIEW

For decades, Iraq has experienced devastation and displacement on a vast, heartbreaking scale. Since 2014 at least three million people in the country's northern province of Nineveh have been displaced by the relentless and violent onslaught of ISIS. Many have fled to camps in Iraqi Kurdistan, mainly in Dohuk, Erbil and Zakho. While the country is fighting to regain some sense of stability and order, the human toll has been enormous — and many fear it will only worsen.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

The economic problems are enormous. The number of people living in poverty has quadrupled since 2013. Once home to as many as 1.5 million Iraqis — including Christians and many other communities — Mosul is all but uninhabitable. Hundreds of thousands of residents have fled the city and the plains to the east of the city. At last count, only a few hundred have returned. Many of the displaced families hope to find their way back, but huge support is needed, since homes, institutions and livelihoods were heavily damaged or destroyed.

IMPACT ON CHRISTIANS

The future looks especially bleak for Christians. Once totalling more than 1.5 million, or 10 percent of the population, fewer than 250,000 Christians remain.

CNEWA'S PRESENCE

CNEWA has been a consistent beacon of hope to the people of Iraq for decades — and that presence continues through this present crisis. Working always in partnership with the local churches, we have provided critical support to the various humanitarian needs that have emerged in the displacement centres in Dohuk, Erbil, Zakho and the surrounding villages, supporting schools, dispensaries, mobile clinics and other works that assist the most vulnerable. In addition to providing assistance for the formation of priests, sisters and catechists, CNEWA provides the means necessary for the psychological support and spiritual accompaniment for the internally displaced, especially the children — insuring the continued availability of the sacraments, of counselling and of prayerful companionship among those who need it most.



CNEWA works closely with the leadership of the Assyrian, Chaldean and Syriac Catholic and Orthodox churches, including religious communities such as the Dominican Sisters of St. Catherine of Siena, in supporting their ministries to care for those most in need throughout Iraq. Among the many projects, we support:

- **Health care for the most vulnerable at St. Raphael and Al Hayat hospitals in Baghdad and at clinics and mobile dispensaries in Iraqi Kurdistan**
- **Programs to assist in the formation of lay leaders, catechists and university students of the Chaldean and Syriac churches in Kirkuk**
- **Blankets, heaters and winter coats for those most in need in winter, and water and small refrigerators for families suffering in the blinding heat of summer in Iraqi Kurdistan's displacement camps**
- **Nursing formula, diapers and clothing for infants and toddlers and their mothers**
- **Computer literacy and foreign language courses to help youth develop new skills**

OVERVIEW

An increasing number of migrants are settling in Israel. Many arrive from Africa undocumented. Others immigrate legally, such as Filipinos, who work in Israel's health care sector. Unskilled labourers from Eritrea and Ethiopia take jobs Palestinians once held until the Separation Barrier blocked Palestinian access to Israel. Despite enormous progress since its creation, Israel is experiencing serious social and political tensions, particularly between its more fundamentalist Jewish communities and the secular elite.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

A majority of Arab Israelis — 53 percent — live in poverty, which some suggest is due to their treatment as second-class citizens. Government subsidies for public infrastructure, health care clinics and schools in Israeli Arab communities lag behind support for the same in Jewish communities. Overcrowded housing remains an issue in Arab neighborhoods as fewer housing permits are issued and incomes decline.

IMPACT ON CHRISTIANS

Christians are a minority within a minority. Arab Israeli Christians count for about 2.4 percent of the population. It is estimated that there are 150,000 Christian migrant workers, of whom 60,000 are Catholic.

Hebrew-speaking, Arab and migrant Christian communities face continuous challenges. One of the greatest is a matter of identity — helping Arab Christians to maintain their history, culture and religious practices in a country where Jews and Muslims predominate and exert the most control. Israeli Catholic school students score high on state tests, but the country's department of education is withholding government funding for Catholic schools, putting that education system at risk.

CNEWA'S PRESENCE

CNEWA has a long and venerable history in this particular corner of the Middle East. As it does throughout the region, CNEWA in Israel offers a lifeline to those who might otherwise feel marginalized or isolated. Working closely with the leadership of the local churches, we support a number of pastoral programs, including faith formation and Bible study

programs targeting young people. We have worked to improve and enhance facilities of church institutions serving those in need of education, health care and social services. We have also taken the lead in supporting programs that serve Israel's Hebrew-speaking and migrant community.



Here are a few examples of CNEWA's collaborative efforts in Israel:

- Through the St. James Vicariate of the Latin Patriarchate, CNEWA offers pastoral and spiritual support to migrants, particularly day labourers and domestic workers
- Supports the children of migrants, providing clean and safe environments, such as the St. Rachel Centre in Jerusalem
- Spearheads initiatives to help Israel's Hebrew-speaking Christians
- Provides support to the ongoing formation of Melkite Greek Catholic clergy
- Assists formation programs and promotes employment opportunities for young adults
- Strengthens the social service institutions of the churches, such as St. Louis Hospital in Jerusalem, which are among the only places where Christians, Jews and Muslims meet in this highly polarized state

OVERVIEW

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has been one of the most welcoming and accepting of countries in the Middle East, but this has proven burdensome in recent years. Refugees have flooded the country by the hundreds of thousands. The king, meanwhile, is contending with a host of regional problems, including the crisis in neighbouring Syria; the rise of Islamic extremism; civil war in Yemen; the sectarian rift in Iraq; continued tensions between Israel and the Palestinians; and overall cooling of relations with Israel.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

The influx of refugees has pushed Jordan's economy to the brink of collapse. With more than a million Syrian refugees, and many more from Iraq, the country is overwhelmed. Inflation and unemployment are both high, and have impacted every community — national or refugee — in this resource-poor country of eight million people.

IMPACT ON CHRISTIANS

Jordan has long appreciated the presence of Christians, who remain a small minority — no more than 4 percent of a population of 9 million — in a country that is overwhelmingly Sunni Muslim. Radical Islam has had an impact on the country, and many Christians have noticed changes at the workplace and in the streets. There is continued fear the extremism and violence in neighbouring Syria and Iraq could seep into Jordan. Much of the Christian elite are known to have an “escape plan” if the situation deteriorates. Nonetheless, the leadership of the churches continues to work hard at fostering good relations with the Islamic community to build up the country, advance dialogue and mitigate religious tensions.

CNEWA'S PRESENCE

CNEWA has deep roots in Jordan. We have long been one of the most ardent and dedicated supporters of refugees, Christian and Muslim, sheltering them — whether from Palestine, Iraq or Syria. Although the churches in Jordan are small and lack resources, we bolster their health care initiatives for the poorest of the poor and provide the best in pre- and post-natal care. Working with religious sisters, we offer formation

programs for youth and young adults and sponsor activities for at-risk girls. When Iraqi Christian refugees fleeing ISIS poured into the country, CNEWA worked with parishes across the kingdom to help settle them in, offering emergency assistance from food to bedding.



Here are just a few ways CNEWA supports the people from Jordan through the works of the local churches:

- **Helping the Dominican Sisters of the Presentation provide health care to the poorest of Jordan's poor, including Syrian and Iraqi refugees, at the Italian Hospital in Amman**
- **Develop ongoing faith formation programs for Jordan's Bedouin Christian communities near Kerak**
- **Provide support to the Pontifical Mission Community Centre in Amman, which offers counselling and tutorial support, as well as courses in English for refugees**
- **Assist Jordan's Catholic and Orthodox parishes secure blankets, mattresses, food and counselling for Christian refugees settling there**

OVERVIEW

Few countries have felt the impact of displacement and migration as dramatically as Lebanon. At the height of Syria's civil war, multiple sources estimated that the country of nearly five million citizens hosted about 1.4 million Syrian refugees and some 31,500 Palestinian refugees who once lived in Syria. Lebanon is also host to more than half a million Palestinian refugees who have lived there since 1949.

Many of these refugees are children — more than half of those registered with UNHCR are under 18. They are deprived of basic services, including health care and education and are most vulnerable to human trafficking and other abuses.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

The economic burdens of the refugee crisis on Lebanon are heavy, and still escalating. The World Bank estimates Lebanon has incurred losses of \$13.1 billion since 2012. Unemployment remains especially high in some of the country's poorest regions while a growing number of Lebanese workers have found themselves replaced by Syrian labourers willing to accept lower wages.

IMPACT ON CHRISTIANS

Lebanon has long been a "safe haven" for Christians in the Middle East — who now account for some 40 percent of the population. Lebanon has a government that is sympathetic to Christian concerns; Christians are well represented politically and dominate its intellectual and cultural scenes. Yet, regional, political and economic instabilities are catalysts for the emigration of young and educated Lebanese Christians. The institutional church is very strong in Lebanon. It is home to four of the six patriarchs of the Catholic Eastern churches, which are dynamic communities. Their activities include effective social services ministering to the needs of the poorest of poor.

CNEWA'S PRESENCE

CNEWA's presence in Lebanon extends back to our earliest days, including uninterrupted activity during the worst of that nation's 15-year civil war. Founded to support these churches and fund their works, CNEWA's activities in Lebanon reflect this vibrancy. We assist the local

churches in providing emergency relief where needed, particularly to those fleeing war in Syria and Iraq who have no food or money. CNEWA provides funds to diocesan social centres to assist in providing medical and hospital care for the poor. We continue to provide microcredit loans for small businesses, to encourage job creation and discourage emigration. We provide grants for seminaries and formation programs, and continue our longstanding support of child care centres and centres for those with special needs — many of them drawn from the refugee population.



CNEWA works with Lebanon's many churches to offer the sacraments and to support the country's poor, including those seeking refuge from the violence in neighbouring Syria and nearby Iraq. Our help includes:

- Partnering with the Melkite Greek Catholic Archeparchy of Zahleh to support needy students from Lebanese and Syrian families
- Support to the Good Shepherd Sisters for their clinic in Jdeideh
- Assistance to the Syriac Catholic Patriarchate and the Maronite Society of St. Paul for their programs to care for Iraqi and Syrian refugees
- Help for pastoral programs, including funds for the formation of lay leaders studying at Our Lady of Protection Centre and annual subsidies for the formation of Maronite, Melkite and Syriac Catholic seminarians

OVERVIEW

For 50 years, Israel has occupied the West Bank. It continues its restrictions on the movement of the Palestinian population, all while seizing land, building new Jewish settlements and demolishing the homes of East Jerusalem Palestinian residents. Palestinians in Gaza live in abject poverty, fearfully anticipating another volley of violence between its Hamas-controlled government and the Israeli Defense Forces.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

The economy of Palestine has been described variously as “dismal,” “crippling” and “declining,” much of it due to strife — especially in Gaza — diminished tourism, corruption and political ineffectiveness. Israel’s Separation Barrier has cut off the flow of Palestinian labour into Israel, driving down incomes and exacerbating unemployment.

IMPACT ON CHRISTIANS

Nearly half of all social service institutions in the Palestinian territories are operated by Christian organizations, Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant, theoretically providing a diverse range of employment opportunities. But the demise of peace talks, the evaporation of hope in a political solution and the absence of economic growth compels Christians — who typically have more resources than the average Palestinian — to leave for better opportunities elsewhere. Less than 2 percent of the population is now Christian.

CNEWA’S PRESENCE

CNEWA works closely with the Catholic ordinaries in the Holy Land, the Latin Patriarchate, and the non-Catholic Eastern churches in assessing and prioritizing needs, and in developing methods to implement projects and programs effectively. Challenges addressed include leadership development of youth and include programs that enhance the education, faith and formation of young men and women, as well as job-training opportunities. While Christians make up a fraction of Gaza’s population, the local churches provide general health care, pre- and postnatal care, education and counselling to people of all ages and religions. We are proud to be there, making a difference in the lives of millions living in grinding poverty.



CNEWA’s work in Palestine stretches back decades, and includes:

- **Annual subsidies to the Paul VI Ephpheta Institute for hearing-impaired children in Bethlehem and the Near East Council of Churches’ pre- and postnatal clinics in Gaza**
- **Helping to protect church institutions in sensitive areas, such as the Hospice de St. Vincent de Paul in the Old City and the Benedictine Monastery on the Mount of Olives, through renovation projects**
- **Providing psychosocial support to those scarred by the war in Gaza, especially young people and the elderly**
- **Programmatic backing for activities of various scouting groups throughout the Palestinian territories, including the De La Salle Group in Bethlehem and the Arab Catholic Scouts in Jerusalem**
- **Tuition assistance and other forms of support to Bethlehem University**

OVERVIEW

The situation for Syria is dire; the needs increasingly urgent. Six years of relentless civil war, and the rise of extremist groups, especially ISIS, have devastated the country and its people. To date, more than half of Syria's people have fled their homes as a result of the fighting, forcing millions struggling simply to survive. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees calls it the "biggest humanitarian and refugee crisis of our time."

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Syria's economy lies in ruins. By one account, the damage to the economy by the epic scale of the destruction will linger for years, even if the conflict ends soon. Demographically, the impact has been significant. Some six million people are displaced within the borders of the country. An estimated four million children are not in school. People are in dire need of food, shelter, medical care and hygiene kits — anything to help them survive.

IMPACT ON CHRISTIANS

Christians constituted about 10 percent of Syria's population before the war — dominating the nation's commercial and professional classes. Today, it is thought half of the Christians have fled the region, settling in neighbouring Lebanon or further afield, such as Armenia and the west.

CNEWA'S PRESENCE

Always, CNEWA works with the men and women of the local churches. They are positioned best to determine who is in need of what, why and how to expedite that help. But delivering assistance to Syria has been particularly difficult as the situation is constantly fluid and the theatre, particularly ferocious. Despite the danger, CNEWA has been working quietly and discreetly in Aleppo, Damascus, Hassake, Homs, Latakia and the Valley of the Christians, providing much-needed help, especially to the very young and very old.

We supply books and school supplies, tuition assistance and psychosocial support for students striving to complete their education. We also ensure the delivery of milk, diapers and clothing for children in these

regions and supporting both the elderly and displaced families. CNEWA supports clinics and dispensaries operated by the local churches, but we are also engaged in providing spiritual support, by covering the operational expenses of 14 catechetical centres in Homs and Qalamoun.



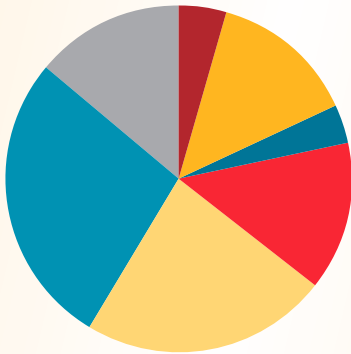
Throughout the crisis of Syria's civil war, CNEWA has worked with patriarchal representatives, bishops, parish groups and religious congregations, particularly the Besançon Sisters, Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, Good Shepherd Sisters, the Jesuit Fathers and the Marist Fathers, to help those desperately in need. We have:

- **Assisted families displaced from Aleppo, Damascus and Homs, providing basic non-food items for at least a year, along with winter clothing, shoes and blankets**
- **Provided milk supplies for thousands of children in Aleppo**
- **Helped sustain health care programs to the displaced and the injured, including St. Louis Hospital, the Al Hakim Dispensary in Aleppo and smaller dispensaries nationwide**
- **Helped pastors in Homs sponsor catechesis and counselling programs**

Middle East Programs 2014-2016

\$33,252,248

\$ TOTAL BY COUNTRY



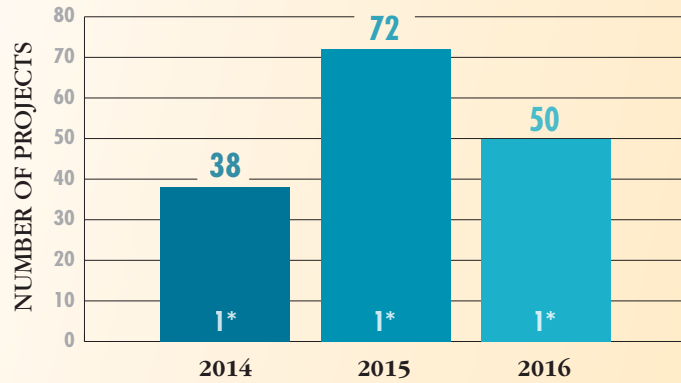
■ EGYPT.....	\$1,565,873
■ IRAQ.....	\$4,522,935
■ ISRAEL.....	\$1,143,845
■ JORDAN.....	\$4,619,791
■ LEBANON.....	\$7,695,993
■ PALESTINE.....	\$9,109,823
■ SYRIA.....	\$4,593,985

\$ TOTAL BY YEAR

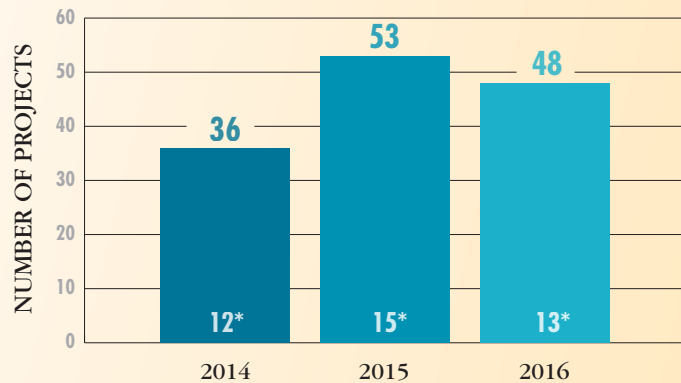


■ 2014.....	\$8,689,137
■ 2015.....	\$12,912,137
■ 2016.....	\$11,650,974

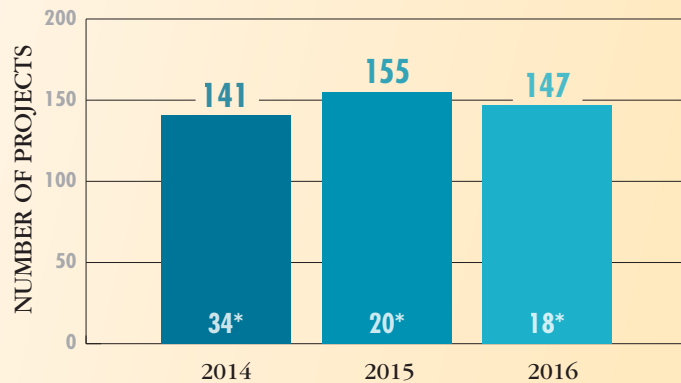
EMERGENCY PROJECTS



PASTORAL PROJECTS



HUMANITARIAN PROJECTS



**Number of subsidized institutions such as seminaries, schools, medical clinics, hospitals and more.*

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Most Rev. Terrence Prendergast, S.J.
Archbishop of Ottawa, Chair

Cardinal Thomas Collins
Archbishop of Toronto, Vice Chair

Cardinal Gérald Cyprien Lacroix
Archbishop of Québec, Treasurer

Most Rev. Lawrence Huculak, O.S.B.M.
Metropolitan Archeparch of Winnipeg

Most Rev. Martin William Currie
Archbishop of St. John's

Most Rev. Michael Miller, C.S.B.
Archbishop of Vancouver



CNEWA Canada

a papal agency for humanitarian and pastoral support