

Iraqi Christians in Need

ICIN, founded in 2007, addresses the basic needs of Iraqi Christians displaced within Iraq and in neighbouring countries by providing financial support and by working with local churches that provide medical care and primary & adult education.

At a time when the situation of our fellow Christian IDPs in Iraq and those living as refugees in Jordan remains difficult and uncertain, we are heartened to see, for example, that there is still hope that some may return to their villages in the Nineveh Plains. The Dominican Sisters of Saint Catherine of Sienna return to what's left of their homes in Qaraqosh¹ and would do well to remind ourselves where ICIN's donation monies go. Below are payments made to date (in US\$) for the 10 months to 31st January 2017:

* Care for the infirm, the orphaned and the abandoned refugees in Erbil by Mahabba & Farah Group and the Myrrh Bearers Fraternity	\$22,000
* Assist with students' education in Baghdad who otherwise go without	\$16,000
* Bait Anya Hostel for the destitute in Baghdad	\$20,000
* Rents for Al-Karma housing for refugees in Erbil	\$30,000
* Support for Marka School Children in Amman, Jordan	\$48,000
* Refugee relief aid to those Christians fleeing to Jordan	\$10,000
* Medical clinics in Erbil for all with medical and healthcare needs	\$27,000
* Emergency Surgical treatment for refugees in Erbil	\$10,000
* Assist Erbil Refugee students who need to attend University of Kirkuk	\$24,000

Please donate online to ICIN at 40-47-19, account 31373927 ref "Marka" (another project above or "general") or **mail cheque, payable to ICIN**, to 43 Queens Drive, Thames Ditton KT7 0TJ.

Please help us by completing a standing order be it monthly, quarterly or annually as it better allows ICIN to budget and remember that standing orders may be cancelled at any time should you wish to do so. A standing order form and gift-aid form may be found on our website <http://www.icin.org.uk/donate/>.

If you are UK tax payer, then your donations may qualify for Gift-Aid that would be claimed by ICIN **at no cost to you**. Gift-Aid declaration forms are available online and at the back of the church during appeals.

God bless you for your generosity and your prayers.

¹ Please visit https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=0X6Pw_PvjB4 for a very moving clip

Marka School for Refugee Children - Jordan



Background

Following the invasion by Daesh (IS) of Mosul and the plains of Nineveh in June 2014, thousands of Iraqi Christian families fled to Jordan to apply for asylum with the UN Refugee Agency, UNHCR.

The estimate of the number of Christian refugees in Jordan has reached twelve thousand and is increasing and given that refugees are not allowed to work, even those of some financial means now find that their resources have dwindled. The situation is critical.

In response to this human tragedy, Fr. Khalil Jaar, Parish Priest of Marka Latin Church in Amman & Director of "Messengers of Peace (MOP)", opened wide the doors of his church and its grounds to receive, house and provide for these Christian refugees. Fr Khalil and MOP have been involved with assisting Iraqi Christian families since their arrival in Amman in 2014, providing food, accommodation and an education for their children. The following BBC report <https://vimeo.com/201261840> gives a summary of the situation together with commentary by Fr Khalil and others.

School Education

A few months after arriving in Amman in February 2015, Fr Khalil put in place an informal school program for 350 children between the ages of 6 - 16 years, said programme referred to as "Marka School for Iraqi children". This was in response to the fact that refugee children are not allowed to enroll at Jordanian state schools and therefore must either join Christian private schools or go without. Given that refugees have neither the financial means to support their children at such private schools nor are there enough such schools in Jordan anyway, the programme quickly became of critical importance.



In response to worldwide appeals, funding was made available by the Pontifical Mission in September 2015 for the enrollment of Iraqi children refugees at Jordanian private Christian schools for the school year 2015/2016. However, these schools do not have the capacity to take many such children and therefore more than 500 children were left without schooling. The need for the Marka School became even more critical and some 200 children were immediately enrolled at the school.

More recently for the academic year 2016/17 and in addition to the 200 children already enrolled, a further 120 Iraqi children remain on the Waiting List pending the availability of funding.

MOP provides free transportation, books, stationery, clothing, healthcare and snacks for the children. Children receive lessons in English and Arabic, Mathematics & Science (all in English) and Religious Education. Lessons and guidance is also provided in the fields of psychosocial and life skills activities.

The twenty qualified teachers providing this education are, themselves, Iraqi refugees and are paid a basic wage to provide them and their families with some financial assistance.



Children welcoming visiting delegation (Fr Khalil shown on far left of the photo)

Financial aid towards housing, food and welfare

In addition, MOP provides the following to the families of the school children:

- US\$50 in the form of a JD30 food voucher plus JD5 for non-food is paid out to each family on a monthly-basis. The food voucher allows the beneficiaries to visit Cooperative Supermarkets in the area to purchase various necessities. A hot meal is also provided for these families at weekends and public holidays.
- For those in special needs including widows and families suffering chronic diseases ...etc. the sum of US\$100 is paid per month.

Accommodation

Some 350 Iraqi Christian families are housed in the Marka host community. Most refugees live in rented flats at Marka and surrounding areas and some stay within the Marka Latin church grounds itself. Even those refugees who were financially reasonably comfortable two years ago are now suffering hardship. More and more is being sought from Marka church programmes while the level of aid donated to MOP continues to drop.

Conclusion

All costs of education, food & non-food items and accommodation of refugees are met from donations made to MOP and yet these donations continue to shrink. The fact that refugees are not allowed to work poses real difficulties, both physical and psychological. Without the financial support of a few NGOs and charities such as Iraqi Christians in Need (ICIN) and other in-kind donations, the situation would turn into a real human tragedy.

Your continuing support to ICIN is gratefully received and, in return, our prayers and the prayers of all those in need will be said for you and your loved ones.

"In truth I tell you, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me."

Matthew 25:40