

# ACTIVITY REPORT **2021**



SOVEREIGN MILITARY HOSPITALLER ORDER  
OF ST JOHN OF JERUSALEM OF RHODES AND OF MALTA

SOVRANO MILITARE ORDINE OSPEDALIERO  
DI SAN GIOVANNI DI GERUSALEMME DI RODI E DI MALTA

ORDRE SOUVERAIN MILITAIRE HOSPITALIER  
DE SAINT-JEAN DE JÉRUSALEM DE RHODES ET DE MALTE

SOBERANA ORDEN MILITAR Y HOSPITALARIA  
DE SAN JUAN DE JERUSALÉN DE RODAS Y DE MALTA

SOUVERÄNER RITTER- UND HOSPITALORDEN  
VOM HL. JOHANNES ZU JERUSALEM VON RHODOS UND VON MALTA



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# A MESSAGE FROM FRA' MARCO LUZZAGO

Lieutenant of the Grand Master

The effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the whole world are evident to all. Millions of families have lost a loved one. Many have suffered the effects of the disease themselves, and countless numbers of people are suffering the consequences of a crisis that has had and will continue to have serious repercussions on the global economy for years to come. And there are the personal consequences – the isolated elderly who have been deprived of affection, the many who have lost their livelihood, and the young people who have been unable to appreciate a precious phase of their lives.

It will take years for peoples and nations to return to pre-pandemic living conditions. A part of the world's population will only be able to succeed because of the humanity and solidarity of those dedicated to helping humankind. Humanity and solidarity are two words which the Order of Malta has been putting into practice for centuries, motivated by faith in our Lord. Human-

ity, solidarity and faith are the vital pillars of a religious order like ours, pillars that over the centuries we have described as our mission in the Latin *Tuitio Fidei et Obsequium Pauperum*.

"When the Sick will come, carry him to bed and as if the Lord was welcomed, offer him the best the house can give." This direction, written in the Holy Land in 1140 by Fra' Raymond du Puy, the second of our 80 Grand Masters, is part of the first Rule of our Order. Even today, so many centuries later, I believe it admirably sums up our mission as a lay religious order of the Catholic Church. It is a mission that places man and his needs - physical, spiritual and moral - at the centre of life.

Since 2017, the Order of Malta has been engaged in a process of reform of its Constitution. The key objective is to safeguard and strengthen the Order of Malta's originality and identity as a lay religious order of the Catholic Church. Reforming a very ancient and unique institution is a complex and delicate task, especially if we are determined to protect our essence as a religious order and our specific institutional characteristics. This reform will enable the Order to confront most effectively the changing context of modern times and the challenges that our mission faces every day.

This new edition of the Activity Report not only gives





an overview of the special programmes developed during the last two years in the 120 countries in which we operate, but also describes how we have adapted our interventions to cope with what I have no hesitation in describing as a real cataclysm in our lives, with even more devastating effects on the most fragile in society. When the pandemic broke out, our imperative was to secure our programmes around the world so as not to interrupt our ongoing humanitarian actions for those in need. Many of our projects have since been expanded and/or converted into programmes for the prevention and treatment of Covid patients and for social, psychological and material assistance. Many activities have been implemented thanks to the invaluable work of our diplomatic missions.

At the level of bilateral and multilateral relations, the Order of Malta has continued to promote the great demands for hu-

mankind: peace, security, humanitarian action, human rights, inter-religious dialogue, migration, refugees, health, environment and sustainable development.

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**Humanity, solidarity and faith are the vital pillars of a religious order like ours. Pillars that over the centuries we have described as our mission in the Latin *Tuitio Fidei et Obsequium Pauperum***

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On this last point, Pope Francis reminds us that climate change constitutes 'one of the main current challenges for humanity'. An increasing number of our projects combine health care with agricultural development and a focus on eco-sustainability.

Finally, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to all those who, during the very difficult ordeal of the pandemic, have worked with such deep commitment to help others, under the symbol of the eight pointed white cross. The dedication and love with which thousands of our members, volunteers, employees and do-

nors around the world have brought help and assistance to the sick, their families, the lonely elderly, the poor and society's marginalised are truly commendable.

# THE COUNCIL COMPLETE OF STATE OF 2020

**Fra' Gottfried von Kühnelt-Leddihn**

*Member of the Sovereign Council*

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**“I can only assure you of my utmost commitment to addressing the challenges awaiting us in the coming months. And first of all, the reform of the Constitutional Charter and the Code”**

*Fra' Marco Luzzago*

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Meeting in Rome on 7 and 8 November 2020, the Council Complete of State elected Fra' Marco Luzzago as Lieutenant of the Grand Master of the Sovereign Order of Malta. He succeeds Fra' Giacomo Dalla Torre del Tempio di Sanguinetto, Prince and 80th Grand Master, who passed away on 29 April 2020.

Forty-four of the Order's members, out of fifty-six eligible to vote, met as the special body whose only assignment is to elect the head of the Order of Malta. Voters arrived in Rome - despite the difficulties caused by the pandemic - from Argentina, Peru, the United States, Lebanon, France, Sweden, Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Switzerland and Malta as well as Italy. The voting took place in the Magistral Villa, the Order's institutional seat, in full compliance with Covid-19 measures. Shortly after the election, Fra' Marco Luzzago was sworn in before the members of the Council Complete of State and the Pope's Special Delegate, Cardinal Silvano Maria Tomasi.



After taking the oath, the Lieutenant of the Grand Master, who holds the office for a year, said: "The Holy Spirit has graciously turned his gaze upon me. I thank each one of you for placing your trust in me and for showing by your presence here today a great love and a generous dedication to our Order. For my part, I can only assure you of my utmost commitment to addressing the challenges awaiting us in the coming months. First of all, the reform of the Constitutional Charter and the Code pursued with such fervour by our late Fra' Giacomo, whom at this moment I remember with emotion."

Fra' Marco Luzzago declared that "2020 was undoubtedly a very difficult year for us all and for our Order. Besides the death of the Grand Master, we had to face the terrible challenge posed by the pandemic. It is indeed with great satisfaction that I see every day the efforts made by our members, volunteers and employees to treat the sick, to reduce the effects of the economic and social crisis, to distribute meals to the poor, to provide them with the care and medicines they need, and to keep in contact with the elderly and the disabled."

One of the new Lieutenant of the Grand Master's first official acts was to confer the title of Bailiff Grand Cross of Justice on Fra' Ruy Gonçalo do Valle Peixoto de Villas-Boas "...for having devoted himself with commendable commitment to the government of the Sovereign Order of Malta as Lieuten-



ant ad interim, during the six months following the death of the 80th Grand Master - six extremely complex months rendered even more difficult by the coronavirus pandemic."



**Fra' Marco Luzzago** was born in Brescia on 23 June 1950. After completing his secondary education at the Franciscan institute in Brescia, he studied medicine for several years at the Universities of Padua and Parma before being called to manage his family's interests. He managed business activities in the consumer industry and large-scale retail distribution for many years.

Fra' Marco Luzzago entered the Sovereign Order of Malta in 1975 and took his solemn religious vows in 2003. He has participated over many years in the Order of Malta's pilgrimages to Lourdes, Assisi and Loreto. Since 2010 he has dedicated his life entirely to the Order of Malta, moving to the Marche to run one of the Order's Commanderies. In 2011 he was made Commander of Justice in the Grand Priory of Rome, where he held the position of Delegate of the Northern Marche and head of the library. Since 2017 he has been a member of the Italian Association of the Order of Malta. He is a relative of Pope Paul VI.

# IN MEMORIAM: FRA' GIACOMO *Prince and 80<sup>th</sup> Grand Master*

**Eugenio Ajroldi di Robbiate**

*Director, Communications Office*

On 29 April 2020, Fra' Giacomo Dalla Torre del Tempio di Sanguinetto, Prince and 80th Grand Master of the Sovereign Order of Malta, died in Rome after a short illness. Even during his last days he had assiduously followed all the Order's concerns and activities, participating in the Sovereign Council meetings and taking all the decisions falling with his remit.

Elected as head of the Order only three years earlier, in this short time he had managed to achieve significant results. His mild but determined temperament enabled the Order of Malta to initiate a new phase of renewal and evolution, starting with the revision of the Constitutional Charter, a delicate and complex process to which the Grand Master had devoted much of his energies, ensuring whenever possible that it would meet the needs of a fast-growing institution, but above all would respect the Order of Malta's nature and traditions. His greatest sorrow, expressed to his closest colleagues a few days before he died, was that he had been unable to complete the reform that still bears his strong imprint.

Giacomo Dalla Torre was born in Rome on 9 December 1944, into a family which, from the time of Benedict XV and for nearly a hundred years, had provided a succession of popes with some of their closest aides.

A man of great faith and compassion, Fra' Giacomo Dalla Torre del Tempio di Sanguinetto had always personally assisted the most vulnerable, serving meals to rough sleepers, even after his election as Grand Master, in Termini and Tiburtina, Rome's main railway stations. He partici-





pated in numerous Order of Malta international pilgrimages to Lourdes and national pilgrimages to Loreto and Assisi. He took part with great joy in the national and international summer camps the Order organised for disabled young people, where he was warmly welcomed by the youthful volunteers and guests.

He was a man of unity and of dialogue, respected and loved by everyone. Fra' Giacomo Dalla Torre played his role as Grand Master with great simplicity and as much personal humility.

He entered the Order of Malta in 1985 and took his religious vows in 1993. He held numerous positions in the Order, including Grand Prior of Lombardy and Venice and then for almost a decade, Grand Prior of Rome. He was first a member of the Sovereign Council and later Grand Commander. On the death of the 78th Grand Master, Fra' Andrew Bertie, in February 2008, he took over the leadership of the Order as Lieutenant ad interim. On 29 April 2017, the Council Complete of State elected him Lieutenant of the Grand Master for one year and then elected him Prince and 80th Grand Master on 2 May 2018.

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**A man of unity and  
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Thousands of messages of condolence, expressions of sorrow, and gratitude for his life, arrived in the hours and days following his death. Heads of State and Government, members and chaplains, doctors and volunteers of the Order of Malta's relief corps, many whom the Order assisted, but also

ordinary people, were united in grief. Pope Francis commemorated him in a message: "I remember the total fidelity to Christ and to the Gospel of this so zealous man of culture and of faith, together with his generous commitment in performing his office with a spirit of service for the good of the Church, as well as his dedication to those who suffer most."

Fra' Giacomo Dalla Torre del Tempio di Sanguinetto rests in the crypt of the church of Santa Maria in Aventino, alongside his predecessors, Fra' Angelo de Mojana di Cologna and Fra' Andrew Bertie. He will be remem-

bered for his exceptional qualities of great humanity and spirituality, for his cordial and affectionate approach and for his simplicity with all with whom he came in contact. He continues to be an example for us all to follow.

## Section 1

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# THE ORDER OF MALTA'S RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Over 4 million victims, more than 200 million people infected. These figures, still on the rise in some parts of the world, only partially reflect the health, social and economic tsunami that has swept across the world since the beginning of 2020. Never before has the Order of Malta's medical and social mission, addressed to all human beings without distinction of ethnicity or religion, been so important. Grand Priories, Associations, Relief Corps, doctors and volunteers have mobilised, alongside the national health services, to bring assistance and hope to the afflicted.



# UNIMAGINABLE CHALLENGES IN THE FULFILMENT OF OUR DUTY

**Dominique de La Rochefoucauld-Montbel**

*Grand Hospitaller*

Within just a few weeks, the Covid-19 pandemic led humankind to remodel health priorities, economy models and all aspects of social life. All inhabitants of the planet were forced to re-think their way of life, putting health first.

Although this was true for everyone, undoubtedly the most affected have been the people living at the margins of society, at the bottom of the social ladder. At the same time many families who had a secure income found themselves in great economic difficulty within a few months.

In this context the words of His Holiness Pope Francis are particularly significant: “God and the World to come”: *In life there are moments of darkness. Too often we think that they only happen to others and not to us, to someone else, in another country, perhaps on a distant continent. Instead, we all ended up in the pandemic’s tunnel.*

In order to emerge from this tunnel, the Order of Malta has continued its activities, doubling its efforts. We were forced to rethink the structures of our charitable projects - to adapt them to the new scenario - and to respond to the new, increased demands for help.



As soup kitchens had to be closed for health reasons, food packages were quickly delivered as replacements; as hospitals had reached their full capacity, new ones were built; as our beloved *Malades* were left at home isolated - since all pilgrimages and camps had to be cancelled - iPads were provided to keep our guests virtually in touch with their families and each other and with us.

## **New challenges led to new initiatives**

New activities were also developed: psychological support centres, medical support procedures, pre-screening posts and vaccination centres. These were all launched keeping in mind the holistic approach of the Order: body and soul are treated equally. And so, I am proud to say, while everyone was confined to their homes, while countries were closing their borders and suspending international support, transnational projects could be carried out.

The Order of Malta’s Doctor to Doctor initiative was set up as a platform of horizontal exchanges across four continents: expertise, experiences and lessons learned were shared and many healthcare specialists could thus be better informed. In the very beginning, very little was known



about this disease which has claimed as many victims as a major war. Because this disease was unknown, there was a lack of protective equipment, then the race for the production and search for swabs for screening and detection, ending with the unequal race for vaccines and treatment.

Requests for support, from the level of national governments down to individuals, from spiritual leaders to local parishes, were a daily challenge. The need was everywhere, as the pandemic was threatening every country equally. The many existing conflicts have continued, and consequently the public spotlight has turned away from the ongoing crises, such as global warming, human trafficking, and the flight of refugees and migrants.

#### **Not an option – a vocation**

Since its origin the Order of Malta has been fighting diseases - from plague to leprosy, from tuberculosis to malaria - and

combatting natural and human disasters, following its tradition but always modern in its action. For the Order of Malta, during this terrible situation, supporting those in need was not an option, but a duty - the natural pursuit of its original vocation: strengthening Faith and relieving suffering.

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### **For the Order of Malta, during this terrible situation, supporting those in need was not an option, but a vocation**

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I wish to thank all our members, volunteers and staff wholeheartedly. They have continued carrying out the Order's activities with tireless dedication, often putting their health at risk. And I wish also to thank those who have so devotedly supported our endeavours.

The months we are leaving behind have forced us to face unimaginable challenges in the fulfilment of our duty to protect the most fragile, the sick, the disabled, the elderly. To these people the Order of Malta has strenuously dedicated its efforts and will continue to do so in the future. We have always been, and will always be, there to help.

# MALTESER INTERNATIONAL'S GLOBAL ACTION AGAINST COVID-19

**Thierry de Beaumont-Beynac**

*President, Malteser International*

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**While Malteser International continues to fight Covid-19 to prevent the spread of the disease among the world's most vulnerable people, one fact is certain: the pandemic will require a global spirit of solidarity if it is to be brought under control**

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The coronavirus pandemic has devastated lives, public healthcare, livelihoods and economies across the world. However, the impact of the pandemic has not been uniform. Communities already facing extreme humanitarian needs became even more vulnerable, and existing inequalities were exacerbated. As the virus spread, people living in countries where conflict has weakened health systems were at increased risk from serious illness and death. Displaced families in overcrowded camps where health services were already overstretched found it difficult to protect themselves.

With national lockdowns and social distancing measures implemented in many countries, the health crisis rapidly developed into an economic one. Countries slid into recession, households lost their income and the price of food went up significantly. By the end of 2020, some 270 million people worldwide were at risk of hunger and starvation due to the cumulative effects of the crisis.

## **Effective response: the coronavirus crisis response plan**

Shortly after Covid-19 was officially declared a global pandemic, Malteser International, the humanitarian organisation of the Order of Malta, launched its Coronavirus Crisis Response Plan in its 29 project countries. The Plan's three-fold aim: sustaining its lifesaving humanitarian operations, preventing further spread of the virus, and mitigating the economic impacts of the crisis on the most vulnerable populations.

The response plan required the adaptation of Malteser International's worldwide programming to Covid-19 realities. Measures taken by governments to prevent infections were hindering access for aid, deliveries and services. Procedures were put in place to enable programme and partner teams to move and provide essential services for communities in need. Remote management was arranged where possible, and programme leaders negotiated with institutional donors for funding flexibility to cope with delays and temporary suspensions of operations caused by the crisis. Despite these challenges, and at risk of infection, Malteser International staff across the world remained at their duty posts, putting their lives on the line to help the poor and the vulnerable.

As part of the plan to support global efforts against Covid-19, Malteser International strengthened health and WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) systems in its project regions, providing healthcare centres with medicines, oxygen bottles for the symptomatic treatment of cases, hygiene items, and personal pro-



protective equipment. Handwashing stations were set up and critical information delivered to the centres, explaining how the virus spreads, encouraging vulnerable communities to wash their hands and stay safe. Lastly, initiatives like cash assistance and food vouchers were introduced to existing programmes to prevent, mitigate and respond to the pandemic's devastating impacts.

### **Involving local communities in crisis response**

Malteser International applied the People-First Impact Method in its response to Covid-19 in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Experience from the Ebola epidemic showed the importance of involving local communities in crisis response. This approach required active engagement with community members to understand their perceptions and solve problems together. Malteser International offered consulting services to healthcare professionals, procured essential medical materials and established handwashing stations in under-served regions of the country. Malteser International also worked with local groups to disseminate information about Covid-19 prevention. The radio 'spots' and Covid-19 information programmes reached up to 1.2 million people.

In addition to the suffering of nearly ten years of civil war, Syria has now had to face the threat of Covid-19. Malteser International continued to support hospitals and outpatient clinics in the country's northwestern region of Idlib, providing them with personal protective equipment (PPE) and medical supplies. To help prevent the spread of coronavirus inside camps for displaced persons and informal settlements, Malteser International is also providing clean water, distributing hygiene kits and ensuring adequate waste management.

When authorities in Pakistan imposed lockdown measures, many day labourers in the country struggled to survive. The loss of a daily income forced families to skip meals or reduce the quantity of food intake. To cater to their immediate needs, Malteser International restructured its project activities to include cash and food assistance for more than 60,000 people affected, including those with disabilities.

In addition to strengthening health systems in Myanmar, by providing personal protective equipment (PPE) to health workers and volunteers, our staff conducted hygiene education sessions for members of the community, reaching over 400,000 people with critical information about how the virus spreads.

In Uganda, Malteser International set up an isolation unit on the premises of the Lubaga Hospital in Kampala. To ensure that the sick or injured receive timely medical aid despite the



imposed lockdown in the country, the hospital was also provided with an ambulance.

In Haiti, Malteser International disseminated information flyers on Covid-19 and distributed hygiene items to people in need, including reaching out with particular care and attention to the elderly.

### **The pandemic is far from over**

The development and rollout of vaccines across various countries has presented new hope, but the pandemic is far from over. Many countries are reporting new infections. People who are living through conflict and poverty are suffering the most. If left unaddressed, the impact of the pandemic will be catastrophic and may drive increased violent conflict in the future.

Thanks to the support of institutions, foundations, and entities of the Order of Malta, Malteser International continues to respond to Covid-19 to prevent the spread of coronavirus among the world's most vulnerable people. One fact is certain: The pandemic will require a global spirit of solidarity if it is to be brought under control.

# WHAT WE HAVE LEARNT FROM THE PANDEMIC

**Georg Khevenhüller Metsch**

*President, Malteser Hilfsdienst*

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**This pandemic was a huge challenge for the Order of Malta in Germany. After more than a year of social distancing and strict hygiene rules, we are all emotionally drained. But this crisis is also an opportunity to learn for the future**

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The year 2020 was a huge challenge for the Order of Malta in Germany. Since the beginning of the Covid-19 emergency we have been fighting it on several levels, both as a humanitarian organisation and as managers of hospitals, nursing homes and social welfare centres. We have faced this crisis with our 75,000 employees and volunteers, whilst at the same time we have also seen it as an opportunity. The measures we introduced a year ago are essentially those still in force today.

At the start of the pandemic we set up a crisis cell. It is a new management structure with employees and volunteers. The cell included the person responsible for the emergency service (head of the crisis cell), the federal doctor, the hygiene committee staff and other staff in charge of emergencies, social services, IT, logistics, purchases and communications. The purpose of the cell, called "Special Structural Organisation" (BAO), was to advise not only on issues regarding the pandemic, but also to give explicit directives to all our operators - directives for compliance with legislation, for coordination with the federal authorities and with the Civil Protection national agencies, as well as for the definition of binding health-and-hygiene recommendations in agreement with other humanitarian organisations. The synergy between specialists and experts has produced a rapid and uniform response in difficult situations. At the height of the pandemic crisis, the BAO met daily.

## **Strengthening care for those at risk**

One of the fastest responses to the crisis was the vigorous strengthening of activities for the elderly and other groups at risk. In over 200 German cities and municipalities we have created almost 400 supplementary social initiatives, helping the afflicted and those in great need. Through telephone consultations and online chats, our volunteers lessened the feeling of loneliness and allayed concerns and fears. In over 150 locations, volunteers organised a free shopping service and home deliveries of medicines, addressing serious deficiencies and thus helping people avoid contagion. Hundreds of new services have been created during the Covid-19 emergency: rough sleepers and other vulnerable people, for whom assistance was lacking, have been given basic necessities; refugees were offered German language lessons online; relatives of dementia patients were given advice and support by phone; pets were walked and, in many places, free face masks were sewn and distributed.



From the spiritual aspect, we have created a social media platform offering weekly assistance and advice for spiritual care and to reassure people. In addition, our spiritual centre has set up a telephone ministry for employees. We have also organised a 'digital mourning room' open to all, where condolences could be expressed and words of comfort spoken directly with those who had lost a loved one.

Our hospitals and care facilities for the elderly have been heavily affected by the pandemic. This is precisely where a supply problem first appeared. There were no more masks, protective clothing was offered at exorbitant prices and often on Fridays employees did not know if they would have sufficient materials for the weekend staff. Thanks to the BAO, which procured supplies from abroad, this problem could be resolved. Volunteers sewed masks and donated them to those who needed them. Masks were scarce everywhere in Europe and the Order of Malta's aid agencies in France, and especially in eastern European countries such

as Albania, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Greece, Kosovo, Hungary and Belarus, received important support from Malteser Hilfsdienst, the Order of Malta's relief corps in Germany.

#### **Our main concern: care centres for the elderly**

With the arrival of summer 2020 care centres for the elderly became our main concern. Visits were no longer allowed and families were torn apart, as the residents were held in isolation. Volunteers gathered in front of these facilities and offered songs and performances to entertain the residents, who watched from their windows. The very young Malteser Jugend volunteers also helped to cheer up the elderly and lonely with flowers and drawings. Despite the high standards of covid prevention measures, it was impossible to prevent many facilities from being seriously affected by the pandemic, with the deaths of residents and the infection rate of medical and paramedical staff.





In some other organisations, where care facilities for the elderly had been closed by the authorities due to a high number of contagions, our staff assisted in the evacuation and hospitalisation of patients in other nursing homes. In the second half of the year, our employees and volunteers set up Covid-19 test centres and helped out at borders, airports and railway stations.

When, at the end of 2020, the German government asked for vaccination centres to be set up, we organised them in several cities. Today, with our staff, we aim to guarantee the fastest possible vaccination of the entire population. The rapid recruitment of sufficient staff for the vaccination centres was another important achievement.

### LESSONS FOR THE FUTURE

1. Implementation of crisis cell.
2. First aid is the operational backbone in a pandemic. Malteser Hilfsdienst's capability in crisis management must be strengthened.
3. 'First aid' and 'emergency' sectors must be ramped up during serious health crises.
4. Cooperation and networking within the Order of Malta must be consolidated and developed.
5. Networking with government agencies and other humanitarian organisations must be expanded to respond more quickly.
6. Our strength lies in recognising new needs and reacting to them in a flexible, creative and rapid manner.
7. Maintain personal contact between volunteers and employees so they do not feel alone. Many of our volunteers are elderly and belong to at-risk groups!
8. Activate multi-level communication channels, including new social networks, to share messages and reports with all the Association's members.
9. No one, not our patients, nor our employees, nor our volunteers, should ever be left alone during a crisis.

# SOLI'MALTE: EMERGENCY STREET SERVICE FOR THE NEW POOR

**Jean-Baptiste Favatier**

*President, Ordre de Malte France (2019 - 2021)*

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**A unique 'package' that offers this 'invisible' population in France wherever they might gather, meals, listening to their concerns, first-aid and a basic hygiene kit**

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With the Covid-19 crisis, Ordre de Malte France is facing a sharp increase in vulnerability that is not limited to food shortages. To address this unprecedented situation, in 2020 a new emergency street service called Soli'Malte was launched to provide the more vulnerable sections of the community with four integrated services: food, healthcare, hygiene kits and psychological support.

## **A growing vulnerability**

France has about eight million people in a precarious condition and 2.2 million people in a very precarious condition. Social cohesion is deteriorating while state emergency aid is lagging behind.

There are 3 types of vulnerability:

- 250,000 more rough sleepers than before Covid-19, who are increasingly isolated because of the lack of emergency services and restriction measures.
- About 500,000 working poor, more vulnerable since they are not used to asking for emergency aid, and emergency systems are not organised to meet their needs.
- 1.5 million isolated elderly and 300,000 marginalised people.





### **An urgent response to the new needs**

To prevent restrictions considered as the best health response from becoming the worst social response, Ordre de Malte France has urgently redirected 80% of its resources to Covid-19 initiatives to meet the new needs. It has set up Soli'Malte, a new concept in food relief, healthcare and social assistance. It is a unique 'package' that offers this 'invisible' population, wherever they might gather, meals, listening to their concerns, first-aid (checking temperatures, blood pressure, etc.) and a basic hygiene kit.

1,500 volunteers, rescuers and health professionals in some dozen large French cities are giving their time to offer this 'all in one' assistance, unique of its kind.

Essentially, three to four volunteers who are involved in the social and healthcare sector are assigned to each of our vehicles. They travel to where people in precarious conditions mainly live or sleep, following a fixed route. Soli'Malte delivers the 'all in one' package from a single vehicle:

- a response to the food emergency - distribution of meals or food parcels;

- hygiene - distribution of hygiene kits;
- general health checks (temperature, blood pressure and oxygen levels) and referral to the health services when necessary, as well as the distribution of masks;
- emergency psychological and spiritual support.

The service is available in: Bourges, Brest, Toulouse/ Bordeaux, Nantes, Reims, Lille and Douai, Clermont-Ferrand, Biarritz and Bidart, Strasbourg, Colmar, Lyon, Paris Boulogne-Billancourt and Rueil Malmaison, Rouen, Versailles, Toulon.

### **A new example of an old vocation**

In its almost a thousand years, the Order of Malta has encountered several pandemics and, thanks to its vocation, has always been able to find the appropriate solutions, assisting, treating and accompanying those made vulnerable by disease, disability, poverty or exclusion. Soli'Malte is a new example of this vocation.

The Soli'Malte system will continue, as it provides effective action on the ground and can be adapted to all situations. With this instrument, Ordre de Malte volunteers are ready and motivated to relieve all forms of vulnerability.



# THE ORDER MOBILISED AGAINST COVID-19: ITALY AT THE FOREFRONT

**Niccolò d'Aquino di Caramanico**

*Delegate, Lombardy*

As the pandemic ran rife in Italy, the Order of Malta mobilised its many organisations to provide immediate responses. During the first dramatic months of the contagion in the country, the most affected by Covid-19 at that time, the Order's various institutions - the three Grand Priorities with their 31 Delegations, ACISMOM, the Italian Association, CISOM, the Italian Relief Corps and the Military Corps, auxiliary of the Italian Army - were activated in the space of a few days. Everyone played their part and they are doing so still. How effective their work has been is confirmed by the recuperation of those assisted and the appreciation of national and local authorities.

In many of the initiatives - in the north, the centre and the south of the country - 'normal routine' has been followed, but with an obviously increased commitment: food was acquired and delivered to those in greatest difficulty; medicines were distributed where needed; disabled patients were accompanied to medical facilities; clothing confiscated by the Guardia di Finanza was distributed to needy families, communities and prisoners.

## **New needs, new initiatives**

Entirely new initiatives were developed to meet the new needs. Some, simple but essential, included delivery of thousands of protective masks, temperature measurements in airports and railway stations, the control of distancing and entry of the faithful in churches when requested by parish priests, the reception and management of people waiting for tests or vaccines at numerous facilities nationwide.

However, other kinds of activities have been much more complex. "The tragedy of covid had at least one positive aspect in that it encouraged our Order's charitable and humanitarian 'creativity'," commented Clemente Riva di Sanseverino, Procurator of the Grand Priory of Lombardy and Venice. Amedeo de Franchis, Procurator of the Grand Priory of Rome, echoed him: "We have found innovative ways to reinvent our work and make it even more effective. This grim socio-health emergency has brought some useful results."

These results have included: being able to work with health and logistics staff on the ship *Splendid*, moored in the port of Genoa and deployed for post-covid treatment; the innovation of tablets used for the cognitive stimulation sessions carried out virtually by the Order's psychologists. We also had to adapt some of our more traditional activities to the new security

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**The national Covid-19 campaign mobilised all the Order of Malta's institutions in Italy: the three Grand Priorities with their 31 Delegations, the Italian Association, the Italian Relief Corps and the Military Corps, auxiliary of the Italian Army**

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measures. In the Order's soup-kitchens – such as those in Rome, Pompei and Varese – where table service has been replaced by take-away food packages.

In the cities where the Order does not run or help to run other institutions' soup kitchens, food vouchers were - and continue to be - a viable alternative. In Milan and other cities, for example, these are handed out in a church or in a centre linked to the local Delegation. The local Delegation, CISOM and Military Corps alternate for this service, confirming the indispensable spirit of internal and fraternal collaboration so especially necessary in these circumstances.

Still further interventions were assessed to best respond to the emergency, ranging from CISOM's fast-track construction of two covid centres in northern Italy to the drive-in for rapid tests in the Order's St. John the Baptist hospital in Rome. "We followed up the tests with vaccinations for the hospital's diabetic patients," says Riccardo Paternò di Montecupo, President of ACISMOM, which is in charge of the facility. "The aim was to ensure that everyone attending the hospital, and especially the patients, was shielded from contagion."

The national Covid-19 campaign also mobilised the Order's Military Corps. Temperature controls, often carried out together with CISOM, and collaboration with road patrols during lockdowns, were among the first commitments to be set up. "We have also found a role with regards to testing,"

General Mario Fine, Commander of the Corps notes, emphasising the collaboration with both local health authorities and the Italian Armed Forces. The support for the Crema

#### **Building two Covid-19 centres**

Two centres dedicated exclusively to Covid-19 patients: this is what CISOM achieved in the first months of the pandemic. In Milan, at the height of the first wave, the Order of Malta's Italian Relief Corps immediately responded to the Lombardy Region's request for help by collaborating on the construction site for the Fiera hospital and in particular by providing logistical and operational support for managing the staff and materials needed to set up the new resuscitation facility. "More than a hundred volunteers helped to set up the Covid Hospital in Civitanova Marche in just 21 days. They worked with the same spirit," says Gerardo Solaro del Borgo, President of CISOM. The result is "...a state-of-the-art hospital of over 5,000 square metres, with 84 beds in intensive and sub-intensive care." Another important activity was that of the Emergency Psychologists teams: 110 professionals in service from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m., seven days a week. Some 3,300 people requested psychological support by phone.

field hospital and other medical units was challenging. The Order's military personnel also took in hand the donation of over 300 personal computers to a range of schools in Lombardy and Sicily so that pupils in financial difficulties could benefit from distance learning.

The special programme caring for the lodging of parents whose sick children needed treatment in central Naples hospitals stayed in place, while observing the challenges of covid measures. "We certainly couldn't abandon the people we put up in our two hospitality houses in Naples – the parents of seriously-ill children in hospital, for example," declares Arturo Martucci di Scarfizzi, Procurator of the Grand Priory of Naples and Sicily. In this way, despite many difficulties, assistance could continue. "The moving letter a little girl wrote us when she left the hospital was the best reward."

Foreign workers, increasingly indispensable to Italian families and to companies, factories and industries, are certainly among the last to be attended to, and often they have no access, or very limited access, to healthcare. In Milan, in the courtyard of a church where Masses are celebrated in languages other than Italian, a medical assistance post

### Monitoring lockdowns with drones

Vehicle traffic is now monitored from the sky – and it is even better if drones are used, since they are much less expensive than helicopters. Some municipal police asked the Order of Malta's Military Corps, which is an auxiliary of the Italian Army, to cooperate in monitoring travel-restriction breaches during lockdown. In Piedmont, the Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems team flew over the San Mauro Torinese, Ozegna, Frossasco, Burolo and San Gius-to municipalities. With the use of state-of-the-art equipment, they facilitated the task of the police in areas with high density population, and where their numbers are limited.

was set up with doctors from the local Delegation. The initiative - 'Mary Comfort of Migrants' – was an immediate success, as confirmed by the growing queue of faithful every Sunday, prompting the Milan municipality to grant its patronage. A further sign of the validity and appreciation of our work.



# THE TINIEST BABIES OF BETHLEHEM

**Michèle Burke Bowe**

*Ambassador to Palestine*

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**During the pandemic 423 babies were admitted to the Neo-Natal Intensive Care Unit, increasing the challenges of the Holy Family Hospital**

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The most hopeful place at Holy Family Hospital in Bethlehem, run by the Order of Malta, is our 18-incubator state of the art Neo-Natal Intensive Care Unit or NICU. It is cheery and welcoming and warm in a country without much central heating. The nurses, residents and doctors carefully tend the fragile babies, helping them to breathe, to maintain good body temperature and to learn to swallow. It is where the care, the hope and the prayers come together to create the everyday miracles of life.

In the NICU, there is a nurses' station surrounded by the babies, each in his or her own incubator. Each incubator has a chair next to it for the mother or father to keep vigil and talk to their new baby. Against the whirrs and beeps of the machinery there is a constant hum of doctors and nurses updating each other. The movement of the staff is perfectly choreographed to provide the best care. The staff is well trained to know when to intervene and when to carefully monitor these fragile infants.

Dr. George heads this department, ensuring the best care and outcome for each newborn. In 2020, the staff admitted 423 babies in need of the lifesaving care of our NICU. Dr. George noted that these babies are arriving earlier and are smaller and sicker when compared to past years. Dr. George attributes this to extremely high levels of poverty and





anxiety because of the pandemic. Most of the mothers tell us that their husbands have been unemployed for a year, creating economic hardship. Most of them share that they feel guilty for not buying prenatal vitamins or coming for regular pre-natal care. They blame the frequent closures and lockdowns and the financial hardship. Mothers prioritise feeding their families before eating themselves.

### **Special care for very premature infants**

Holy Family Hospital is the only hospital in the region that can deliver and care for babies born before 32 weeks. In 2020, our Hospital had 67 babies born before 32 weeks, whereas in 2019 there were only 33. The hope is that the four babies born at 23 or 24 weeks in a pandemic will not only have survived, but will thrive, despite their extreme prematurity. Their parents, so fearful at first, began to feel more hopeful each day. Namat, who delivered Maya weighing just one pound (0,450 grams) at 23 weeks, says that she is sure baby Maya lived because Doctor George was careful and patient and that the nurses sang to her, encouraging her to become strong. Maya

is breathing on her own now and swallows well. She is almost ready to go home. Namat says she's a Holy Family Hospital miracle.

The greater number of very high needs babies has strained the doctors and nurses who have been working since March 2020 without a vacation. The staff are all working extra time to help cover the days for those in quarantine or who are infected with Covid. The NICU budget has been adversely affected by the long stays and more intensive needs of the babies. 25 infants stayed 50 or more days in the NICU, with some still hospitalised - an increase of 50% over 2019. The costs of these long hospitalisations are well beyond what any Bethlehem family could cover. Since few families have any medical insurance, the Hospital turns to our Poor Case Fund to cover these costs, relying on the Holy Family Hospital Foundation to find generous donors. Thanks to the Order of Malta, the tiniest babies of Bethlehem have the whole NICU team helping them and cheering them on in their struggle to survive. Thanks to you, we count Maya as another everyday miracle at Holy Family Hospital.

# A CONTINENT WHERE PROPER HEALTH CARE IS OFTEN OUT OF REACH

**José Joaquín Centurion**

*Hospitaller, Cuban Association*

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**The Order of Malta's Associations in Central-South America and the Caribbean reached out to the most vulnerable, supplying necessary products ranging from food to basic necessities to medical supplies**

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In five Latin American countries (Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Panama and Peru), Covid-19 has become the leading cause of death, and the second leading cause in Belize. Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico and the USA. Carissa Etienne, head of the Pan American Health Organisation, noted that "Latin America is one of the most unequal regions in the world (...) The many millions who rely on the informal economy for their livelihood did not have the option to stay at home (...) and for people living in marginalised settings and remote areas - like our indigenous communities and migrants - proper health care was often out of reach."

## **Order organisations intensified their support for the vulnerable**

The Order of Malta's Associations in Central-South America and the Caribbean reached out to the most vulnerable, supplying necessary products ranging from food to basic necessities to medical supplies.

Over the critical months of 2020, all the Associations committed to ongoing support for the afflicted. The Association of the Order in Argentina, for example, distributed nearly 12,000 kg of food and 7,700 meals per week, whilst the Bahamian Embassy gave financial support to local charities and The Bahamas Feeding Network. The Colombian Association supplied the Bogota area and multiple areas of the country with weekly distributions of food and essential goods. In the diocese of Cucuta they also assisted in the care of migrants from Venezuela. The Cuban Association continued with deliveries of food. The La Casa de Malta Centre was closed initially during the outbreak but after a few months reopened with careful observation of hygiene, and continued full delivery of food and supplies at the Centre, while the Cuban Association's youth volunteer group delivered around 15,000 sandwiches a week to the vulnerable. The Cuban Association also maintained home delivery of the Eucharist to the housebound on Sundays. And in Cuba, most of their facilities managed to deliver food in compliance with severe restrictions. Medication was sent to Haiti through the Angels of the Caribbean (Haitian nurse corps of the Cuban Association). Medical supplies - mainly respiratory support side-arm nebulisers to address the Covid respiratory insufficiency - were sent to St Joseph's Mercy Hospital in Georgetown, Guyana. The Association in Panama continued with the delivery of food, toiletries, masks, hospital equipment as well as sewing machines so that protective masks could be sewn and sent to various entities and vulnerable groups. Masks and sewing machines from the Panama Association were also donated to Venezuela.





Food, clothing and support was delivered by the Associations in Paraguay, Peru, and the Delegation in Puerto Rico. Sao Paulo continued as a priority, giving precedence to emergencies and the 'flu vaccine campaign. The Pharmacy Centre remained open and online consultations for pregnant women continued. The Auxilio Maltes from Chile delivered respiratory devices it had in stock to housebound patients. Eighteen new bi-level positive airway pressure machines were given to chronically ill patients so they could be treated at home, thus freeing up hospital beds, and they donated medical supplies including filters, masks, face protection and stethoscopes to the San José Hospital in Santiago, Chile. The Dominican Association continued to supply food to the marginalised community surrounding their three clinics in Herrera, Haina

and Monte Plata, while their in-kind operation continued to distribute donations to over 300 health facilities across the country. The Government of Guatemala invited the Guatemalan Association to join the Guatemalan 'Unit for the Control of Infectious Disease' dedicated to discussions concerning the Covid-19 emergency.

The Mexican Association delivered medicines to local hospitals, medical centres, and shelters. In addressing the COVID pandemic, the Associations of Peru, Guatemala, the Dominican Republic and Colombia developed solid and effective relationships with their national Governments.

In all these activities, the Order enacted its mission to support those in great need, all the while observing strict pandemic measures where required.

# DOCTOR TO DOCTOR: A GLOBAL NETWORK OF HEALTHCARE EXPERTS

**Marianna Balfour**

*Diplomatic Public Affairs and Press*

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**The Order of Malta, together with Forward Thinking, has created a network of medical experts and policy makers to share scientific findings and to initiate a learning process on the Covid-19 pandemic**

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The first Doctor to Doctor meeting was convened by the Order of Malta, together with the British think-tank Forward Thinking, in April 2020, shortly after the outbreak of Covid-19 in many European countries.

As Italy was the epicentre of the new emergency, the Italian organisations of the Order of Malta were quick to establish new Covid wards and field hospitals, and to launch programmes to support the national health system. In a very short time the Order of Malta's aid organisations in Germany, France and many other European countries were also in the forefront, fighting the pandemic which was by then rapidly spreading across Europe. Given its strong presence in the Middle East, the Order of Malta also focused its attention on the escalation of the virus in the region, already severely affected by chronic political, economic and social crises. Likewise, sessions were launched in Central and South America, regions gravely affected by the pandemic and struggling with the implementation of lockdowns.

## **Contributing to knowledge, treatment and best practice**

The Doctor to Doctor initiative was developed to allow medical personnel, scientists and health authorities of different countries who were confronting the same unprecedented grave health hazard, with its far reaching social implications, to learn one from another. The aim was to share the latest medical advancements, to promote a better knowledge of protocols in the treatment of Covid-19 patients, and to discuss containment strategies. Through its wide diplomatic network, the Order of Malta's Foreign and Hospitaller departments were able to enlist the support of senior representatives of a number of national health authorities to join in productive and informative online debates. Immunologists, virologists, fast response doctors and health policy makers all contributed to advancing the understanding of Covid-19.

Right from the launch of the initiative, it was clear that the Covid-19 pandemic represented a common threat, and that any proposal which addressed the challenges it posed was doomed to fail unless the approach was both global and transnational. The Doctor to Doctor platform developed out of the recognition that states with fragile health systems would benefit from sharing in the expertise of their professional colleagues around the world. The initiative has since become an example of a mechanism of cooperation in approaching common challenges. Sessions focused primarily on issues relating to treatment, best practice for containing the virus, and the importance of providing personal protective equipment (PPE) for healthcare workers. Around 150 health experts from Australia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ger-

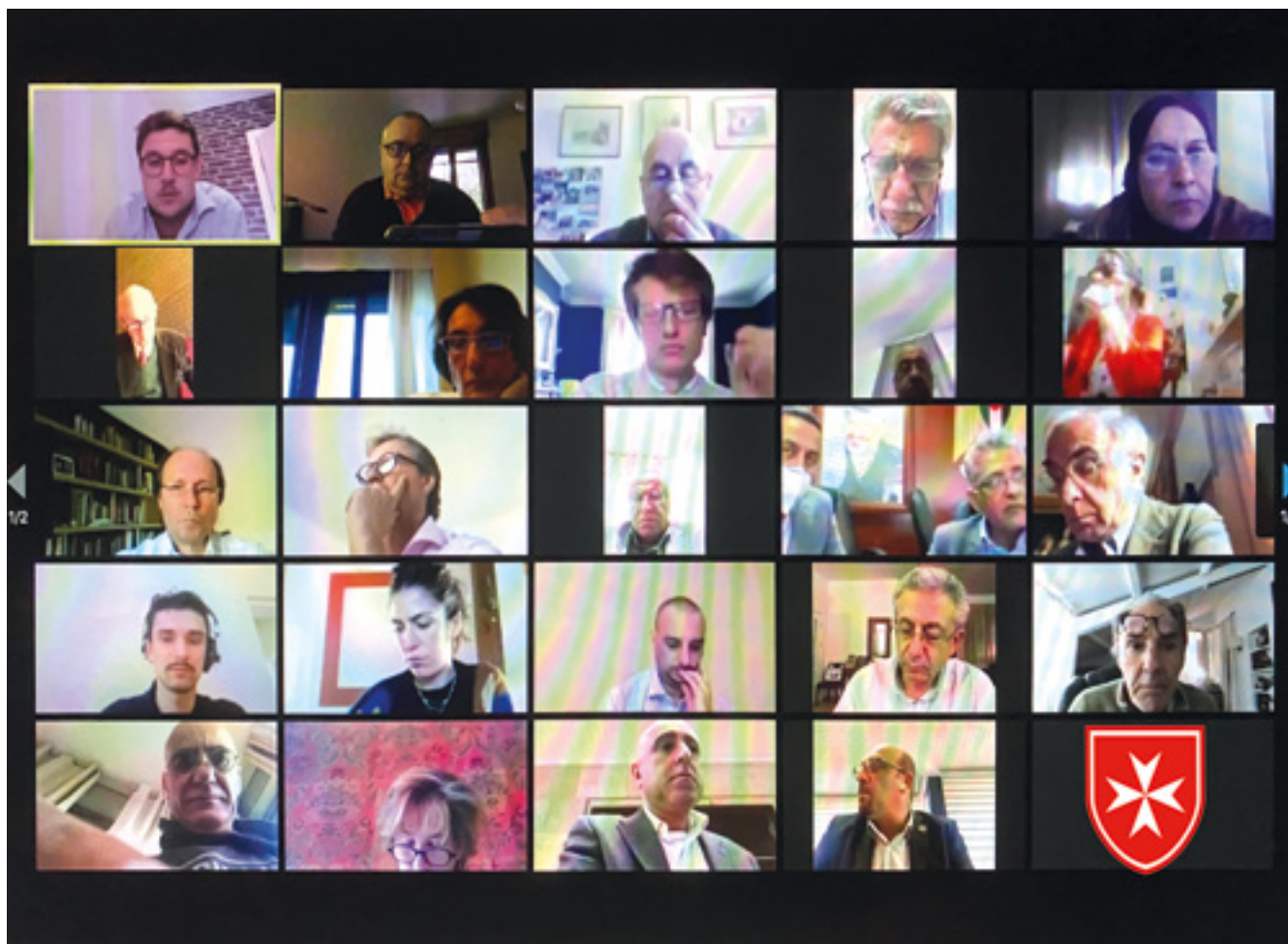


many, Iran, Ireland, Italy, Spain, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Sweden, Syria, Turkey, the United Kingdom, Yemen, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Porto Rico, Dominican Republic, USA and the World Health Organisation participated in the discussions.

The findings of these meetings are still developing and the initiative itself, still ongoing, offers a hub of knowledge and experience as the pandemic progresses. While the distribution of vaccines goes on, and the scientific community continues to study and propose new practices to fight the pandemic and its consequences, Doctor to Doctor sessions are mirroring the scientific advancements and offering a broad interpretation, with input coming from many different countries. New insights are constantly being discovered as health authorities gather more data and evidence which indicate what approaches and treatments are the most effective.

### **'Doctores en la Red'**

Within the framework of Doctor to Doctor, the government of the Order of Malta organised a segment, called 'Doctores en la Red' (Doctors in the online network), specifically for Latin American countries. There were four webinars, three in Spanish and one in English, involving 16 countries: Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, as well as Spain, the United States and Italy. The seminars were attended by some 260 people, mostly doctors and nurses, all involved in the fight against Covid-19. Topics included: prevention of Covid-19, diagnosis, transmission of the disease, spread and evolution of the virus, medical and pharmacological treatment. Eight national Associations of the Order were involved in organising the webinars, including Spain.



## Interview with

### **Dr. Rainer Loeb, M.A.**

Chief Medical Officer, Malteser Hilfsdienst Germany,  
and Consultant Anaesthetist

#### **In your experience, what is the added value of the Doctor to Doctor project?**

The Dr2Dr project is one of the best ways of promoting knowledge and experience of the pandemic. It is very helpful to learn from others around the globe, and exchange information and technical know-how on what we have learned, step by step, in the fight against Covid-19. This is a unique project which connects diplomats, political leaders, international and local institutions and specialised doctors, to learn from each other's experience to get this pandemic under control. Dr2Dr is bringing together a large quantity of scientific and practical knowledge. Also, the format can be easily adapted to the specific situations and needs of individual countries.

#### **What are the most relevant outcomes of the initiative?**

First of all, it is because anyone around the world who needs advice and support can participate in the project, and be a part of the open discussions on the most pressing issues. And it is an example of how charitable support can still be given, despite the impossibility of real closeness. All of this will never completely replace active help on site, but it is an important and effective way to assist.

#### **Have the meetings helped you as a doctor to reach a better understanding of the disease and its management?**

Absolutely yes. All our lives we go on learning, and a situation such as a pandemic brings with it a completely changed situation and a real challenge for the whole world. So it is extremely helpful to exchange views, knowledge and experience, so that the best possible techniques and protocols can be used in every location, and adapted to local conditions.

#### **Do you think regular meetings with health experts can be used as a means to confront future similar global scenarios?**

There can only be one answer: yes. From the start, we agreed that these meetings of a global network of healthcare experts with politicians, local decision-makers and end users are a great support in dealing with such challenges, whether great or small, as they will come up again and again. The Dr2Dr Initiative is a blueprint that will be applicable to, and helpful in, many situations.



#### **As a doctor working on the front line, what have you found most challenging so far?**

The most challenging aspect in treating Covid-19 patients in our hospital is the 'distancing' aspect. This is in addition to the challenge in treating this systemic, highly infectious disease for which we have no causal therapy. On the one hand, there is the physical distance that we must maintain in daily dealings with Covid-19 patients, but on the other, we must also maintain distance with all other non-Covid patients and their relatives with whom we come into contact. There is the challenge of distancing patients from their relatives and friends, even if they are critically ill, although we know that these contacts are emotionally so significant, and sometimes essential, for a good recovery. It is so important to find a way of enabling people with Covid-19 to have a certain degree of contact, especially those seriously ill or dying. Even although we know how to treat patients suffering from a highly infectious disease, this time is different because there have been so many sick people at the same moment - and with that, many dying in a short time. Training and strengthening resilience for the medical staff is a very important issue: finding closeness with patients and their families in a relationship that cannot be physically close is a real challenge.

## Section 2

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# KEEPING THE FOCUS ON OTHER GLOBAL CHALLENGES

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The Covid-19 pandemic has polarised the world's attention over the last two years. But some epoch-making challenges - such as climate change, migration, religious fundamentalism, human trafficking - have not yet been overcome and indeed require the greatest effort of all: from individuals, as well as states and international entities.

The Order of Malta continues to channel its aid in particular towards the populations of those countries which, already tried by serious socio-economic crises, are now in even greater difficulty.



# SAFEGUARDING LEBANON IN A CONTEXT OF EXTREME FRAGILITY

**Marwan Sehnaoui**

*President, Lebanese Association*

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**To respond to the multiple crises that will impact the country for many years to come, the Lebanese Association has planned a long-term programme for resilience-building, rehabilitation of socio-medical infrastructure, and food security**

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Lebanon is currently facing the worst crisis in its history in less than two years, the Lebanese population have been heavily impacted by multiple financial, social, economic and health crises, in a context of extreme fragility that started deteriorating nine years ago with the refugee crisis (Lebanon is host to 1.5 million Syrian, Palestinian and Iraqi refugees). The Beirut Harbour blast of 4 August 2020, one of the greatest non-nuclear explosions ever recorded, further aggravated the precarious humanitarian situation of the entire population. The powerful blast caused devastating damage, killing more than 200 people, injuring 6,500 and depriving 300,000 of housing.

The Lebanese Association of the Order of Malta initiated a rapid response plan to address the different, unprecedented and emerging repercussions from the explosion, while continuously responding to the healthcare and social welfare needs across the country, in addition to addressing the resurgence of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Thanks to the generosity of its partners and donors, among which are Malteser International and several national Associations of the Order, the Lebanese Association was able to treat more than 1,000 patients in the two days following the explosions, by deploying its Mobile Medical Units in the heart of wounded Beirut. The Chabrouh Centre was immediately set up to shelter families who had lost everything. A mental health support hotline was put in place to support people dealing with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

The Youth volunteers played an extraordinary role in this first response by cleaning damaged houses and later refurbishing them, offering food relief and distributing hygiene kits.

Among several initiatives, the Association rehabilitated five heavily damaged primary healthcare centres in Beirut, supporting one of the largest psychiatric hospitals which suffered severe repercussions from the blast. And in addition to the demands created by the Covid-19 pandemic, the Association supported the restoration of a church, offered help to 19 women-lead SMEs, supported education by providing computers to a heavily damaged school and is still continuing to provide mental health and psychosocial support.





But the Beirut blast remains one of the multiple crises hitting the country. Since October 2019, the percentage of the population living in extreme poverty has risen from 8% to 23%. It is estimated that about 1.2 million Lebanese are currently living below the poverty line. Growing poverty and food insecurity as well as increasing health problems are expected to lead to an overall increase in tensions, thus worsening living conditions, particularly of vulnerable people.

In a bid to support small farmers and the local economy, boost community health, as well as strengthen food security by improving food availability and accessibility, the Lebanese Association has launched an agro-humanitarian project. It has provided so far around five million seedlings of winter and summer crops to 1,335 small farmers. The importance of the project lies in each beneficiary donating 5% of his/her agricultural production to be distributed

among the most vulnerable communities in receipt of the Order's health care services.

To be able to respond to the multiple crises that will impact the country for many years to come, the Lebanese Association has planned a long-term programme for resilience building, the rehabilitation of basic socio-medical infrastructure and social cohesion to strengthen health structures, and food security at national level.

It is thanks to all those who are standing by our side, that we are able to carry on our mission. But most importantly, we are able to contribute to the safeguarding of Lebanon's core identity, as St John Paul II declared: "Lebanon is more than a country; it is a message of freedom and an example of pluralism for both the East and the West," and it is currently seriously threatened to disappear.

# A CHANGE OF PACE: COMBINING ENVIRONMENT WITH HEALTHCARE

**Giuseppe Morabito**

*Diplomatic adviser to the Grand Chancellor*

Institutions, especially the oldest ones, are resistant to change and thus condemn themselves to indifference, or even worse, hasten their decline. The Order of Malta, albeit remaining faithful to its origins as a hospitaller institution, constantly changes, adapting to the times. Today, this is demonstrated through its initiatives in the countries where it operates: health care remains its primary objective, as the ongoing pandemic shows, but health care alone is no longer enough. The international experience of those working in the healthcare sector, especially in countries afflicted by chronic poverty and scarce resources, shows that treating people without inquiring if they have regular livelihood support condemns them to physical weakness and therefore to illness. Thus, several of the Order's projects combine healthcare and disease prevention with development of agriculture, which is still the main source of livelihood in many regions of the world.

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**Several Order of Malta projects combine health care and disease prevention with agricultural development, which is still the main source of livelihood in many regions of the world**

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## **A change of pace**

Where, however, this change of pace is even more evident is in the environmental sector. Pope Francis' encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, whilst following those of recent popes, additionally represents a turning point in times of extraordinary climate change and accelerated environmental deterioration. The encyclical not only shows the negative effects on social welfare and health of uncontrolled environmental exploitation but also indicates the way forward, starting from a sustainable use of resources, the elimination of waste (the 'throwaway culture') and the protection of biodiversity. It is the phenomenon of environmental deterioration which affects the poorest and most vulnerable populations.

Following the Holy Father's proposition of 'integral ecology', the Order of Malta is adapting the way it works, starting with the awareness that the environment is the 'creation' which it is our duty to preserve, for us and for future generations.

I mention here just some of the Order's works in developing countries, which are carried out by Malteser International (MI) and the Order of Malta's French hospitaller activities organisation (Ordre de Malte France). These are two very different organisations and any comparison would be out of place. MI is a humanitarian relief agency and therefore is not exclusively involved in health care; Ordre de Malte France, whilst remaining faithful to its original mission of health care, is developing an environmental awareness that has prompted it to change its course of action, starting with a greater focus on renewable energy and the circular economy.



### Developing environmental awareness

An effective example is in northern Uganda, where a community of refugees from South Sudan has been established. To meet the housing demand, Malteser International with a local partner Impact Building Solutions Foundation (IBSF) is using agricultural waste (which would otherwise have been burned, polluting, inter alia, the environment) to produce building material. Three objectives have thus been achieved: protection of the environment (the houses have a low environmental impact and water and wood consumption has been avoided); creation of jobs for the local community and additional income for farmers; provision of housing needs for South Sudanese refugees.

In Haiti, one of the poorest countries in the world, MI has launched a project to preserve the mangrove-rich rainforest, creating employment for the local population in forest and biodiversity conservation and in water-efficient agricultural activities, thanks to new forms of irrigation. This has stopped the soil erosion that forced people to emigrate in search of more fertile land, and it has initiated a reforestation policy that has become a new source of income. A varied diet, with beneficial effects on people's health, completes the picture.

In India, in the Thar Desert, Rajasthan, MI has introduced crops adapted to the region's extreme climate and water-saving irrigation systems. The population of beneficiaries, consisting of 'Dalits' (the untouchables) and tribal groups, have thus found a valid reason for not emigrating from the lands they had always inhabited.

In Iraq, on the Nineveh plain, where efforts are being made to promote the return of Christians and other religious minorities driven out and persecuted by the Daesh, MI is installing solar panels for heating ten rehabilitated and two newly-built schools, in addition to a system of non-formal education and psycho-social care at a distance. The project is consistent with the Order of Malta's strategic objective of curbing the haemorrhage of Christians from the Middle East, a region where Christians are traditionally an element of dialogue between the different faiths, starting with Sunnis and Shiites.

In Colombia, in the Guajira region in the north-east of the country, MI has a project for developing small-scale agriculture, promoting traditional crops, respecting biodiversity and optimising the use of water (all cited in Laudato Si).

### Encouragement of sustainable projects

For its part, Ordre de Malte France has launched a programme in the healthcare, environmental and social fields, called Nzela ("way" in the Lingala language), in the Likouala department, an isolated area in the north-east of the Republic of Congo. The target population is made up of Aka pygmies, who live 'in' the forest and 'off' the forest. They are traditionally affiliated with the Bantu, a majority in the Congo, but a minority in Likouala. The objective is to combat the



region's endemic diseases (leprosy, malaria, AIDS, 'monkey pox') by organising mobile medical units to reach remote villages and by training health professionals for screening and disease prevention. In the social and environmental sector, the aim is to free the Aka from the semi-slavery in which they live and to adopt sustainable use of forest resources (the Aka are fishermen and hunter gatherers), such as honey production, not strictly an ecological project, but with an important focus on the environment in one of the most

difficult regions in the world. Another innovative aspect of the project is the choice of partners, starting with the French Development Agency and continuing with a local industrial company (Compagnie Industrielle des Bois), the Order's Global Fund for Forgotten People, and the American Leprosy Mission. The targeted choice of partners is also important, because it enables the sustainability of projects and diversifies the Order of Malta's sources of funding, inevitable if we want to have greater presence in the humanitarian field.



# MALTESER INTERNATIONAL LOOKS INTO THE FUTURE

**Clemens Mirbach-Harff**

*Secretary General, Malteser International*

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**The mission of the Order of Malta to serve our lords the poor and the sick is perennial. But it has always been implemented by adapting it to the times, using the best possible tools and approaches**

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Malteser International was founded more than sixty years ago. The purpose was to ensure that the Order and its uniquely Catholic articulation of human dignity would continue to be represented in the complex structures of international humanitarian cooperation developed since 1945. Today we continue to carry out this role in thirty countries around the world and strive constantly to fit our efforts to a wide and shifting range of circumstances.

Faced with rapid technological change, changing expectations amongst donors and aid recipients, and an increasingly uncertain and globalised landscape, the humanitarian sector is currently undergoing the most significant period of upheaval in its history. New forms of aid continue to grow in importance, and we are working to help maintain the Order of Malta's traditional position at the forefront of technical developments. This includes partnerships with sustainable enterprise, for example, in the production of environmentally friendly construction materials from agricultural waste products in Africa; or by expanding the use of flexible systems to provide cash aid in place of traditional deliveries, thereby protecting the dignity of recipients and reducing waste by allowing individual families to cater to their own needs.

## **Local entities are the partners of first choice**

In the medium term, the humanitarian world is committed to the strengthening of local partner organisations in place of international NGOs. This strategy builds resilience to shocks and disasters, helps to ensure that aid funding and collateral benefits reach and remain in the countries that need them most, and helps to reinforce an accountable model of civil society. As local capacities continue to grow, international organisations are taking on more specialist roles. Our internationally certified Emergency Medical Team is ready for deployment within hours anywhere in the world, and was first employed in 2020, where it supported local medical services in Cameroon, dealing with the coronavirus pandemic. Local entities of the Order are always our partners of first choice. In 2020, for example, we embarked on an ambitious pilot programme to strengthen the Lebanese Association of the Order in the challenge of catering to one of the world's largest per capita refugee populations – an issue that no country will be able to escape in future, as conflict, climate change and instability continue to unfold.





### Flexibility and innovation

Since becoming Secretary General of Malteser International at the end of 2020, following fifteen years as a member and volunteer of the Order, I have been struck by the creativity and strong commitment of our staff all over the world, particularly in the difficult circumstances of the pandemic. My first task: to harness the opportunities provided by the ongoing upheavals in almost every area of our lives and work,

by developing a comprehensive future strategy together with key innovators and influencers from across our field and beyond.

I am confident that, with our strong traditions of flexibility and innovation aligned with clarity of purpose, Malteser International and the Order will continue to set standards of quality, dedication, and above all loving care for the most vulnerable and marginalised all over the world.

# USE AND MISUSE OF HIGH TECH IN HUMAN TRAFFICKING

**Michel Veuthey**

*Ambassador to monitor and fight human trafficking*

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**The Order of Malta will continue to promote human dignity and to use its international status and diplomatic network to raise awareness of this odious phenomenon**

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## **Setting the stage**

Trafficking in human beings, a contemporary form of slavery, is a universal scourge which is often invisible. There are more slaves today than ever before in history. Slavery affects between 40-60 million people in various forms, from forced slave labour, to sexual slavery, forced organ transplants, to child soldiers, the sale of children and the worst forms of child labour.

Slavery generates USD 150 billions of illicit profits for traffickers every year. 50% of slavery victims are in labour slavery, 37% are in forced marriages, 12% are in sex slavery. Within these statistics, 71% of victims are females, 29% are males, and 25% are children under the age of 18.

## **High tech promoting human trafficking**

Within the framework of human trafficking, high tech is used in the form of telecommunications, smart phones, computers, artificial intelligence, information technology, mapping technology, satellites and, of course, websites and social networks.

High tech is often misused by human traffickers to identify potential victims on social media and entrap them in exploitation; to recruit victims and 'customers' for online child pornography, sex and labour trafficking; to recruit, advertise women and men for sexual exploitation; to advertise deceptive labour recruitment and migration opportunities; to advertise and control victims of slave labour; to hide traffickers and exploiters (through online anonymity of criminals and financial proceeds); and to facilitate illegal organ transplantation and exploitation. Furthermore, apps can also be used by traffickers to attract children and other victims into forms of human trafficking.

## **High tech preventing, combating human trafficking, and rehabilitating victims**

As ICAT, the Inter-agency Coordination Group Against Trafficking in Persons states in a 2019 document Human Trafficking and Technology "The development of technology has had an important influence on the crime of trafficking in persons, presenting both challenges and opportunities. While technology is frequently misused to facilitate trafficking in persons, its positive use can also help practitioners combat the issue, through aiding investigations, enhancing prosecutions, raising awareness, providing services to victims, and shedding new light on the make-up and operation of trafficking networks. Taking this into account, future success in eradicating human trafficking, in its many forms, will depend on how countries and societies are prepared for and equipped to harness technology in their responses."



Thus, high tech tools can help prevent, combat and prosecute human trafficking, and rehabilitate victims: they do this using apps and tech tools to raise awareness, identify and support victims; to aid in investigation by evaluating a plethora of decision alternatives, and provide actionable insights. The tools enhance prosecution through data aggregation and analysis, with satellite imagery and geospatial mapping and through artificial intelligence and facial recognition (to identify victims and traffickers). Blockchain is used to monitor supply chains; technology is used to disrupt human trafficking and increase survivors' access to resources, as does the business coalition, Tech Against Trafficking.

#### **High tech as a support**

In conclusion, we must use high tech to promote cooperation, build partnerships, create coalitions and share best practices between all stakeholders.

As the Ambassador of the Sovereign Order of Malta to monitor and combat trafficking in persons it is my role and my duty to work with the Order of Malta's international status and diplomatic network to raise awareness of this odious phenomenon and thus to counteract one of the worst crimes in the world in which we live.

***For more information on the Order of Malta's commitment:***  
***[nohumantrafficking.orderofmalta.int](https://nohumantrafficking.orderofmalta.int)***

# ADDRESSING THE HUMANITARIAN CHALLENGES IN LIBYA

**Julian Weinberg**

*Political Dialogues Director, Forward Thinking*

In 2015 the Order of Malta, together with the non-governmental organisation Forward Thinking, was invited by leaders in Libya to help them respond to the migration crisis in the country. Libya was then and still is at the forefront of the refugee and migration crisis in the Mediterranean. However, Libyans argued that this was a global challenge, driven by factors beyond their border and which was manifesting itself within their country as an indirect result of the conflict stemming from the 2011 uprising. They felt that the migration crisis was becoming a risk to the sovereignty of Libya that needed urgent attention and support.

In response, the Order of Malta created spaces for Libyan politicians and officials from across the country to meet, identify their most pressing needs and develop a Libyan strategy for responding to the crisis. Because migration was seen as a common challenge, it provided an opportunity to bring together individuals who otherwise would have struggled to meet because of the conflict.

Following events in Rome and Tunis, Libyan officials asked for support with the humanitarian challenges around migration and to promote dialogue aimed at contributing to a more peaceful situation in the country. A series of workshops was designed in cooperation with the San Remo Institute for Humanitarian Law and planned to take place in February 2020. However, the Covid-19 pandemic prevented it from taking place at this time. The workshops were eventually facilitated online in February 2021.

The training workshops were developed through extensive consultations with Libyan officials at the forefront of the crisis in the country. They aimed to develop a common understanding of international humanitarian law and migration among Libyan policymakers and practitioners.



**Forward Thinking** is a London based charity founded in 2004 to promote dialogue and support the resolution of conflict in the Gulf-MENA region. In Israel-Palestine, Forward Thinking works to create an inclusive climate where previously unengaged stakeholders – particularly those perceived as hardliners – can be involved in improving the prospects for peace. At a regional level, Forward Thinking facilitates the Helsinki Policy Forum to bring together government officials and parliamentarians from across the Gulf-MENA region and Europe to address shared policy challenges and clarify misperceptions. Finally, the UK Programme works with British Muslim communities to help them access local and national decision-makers to discuss shared challenges and identify where policy changes may be required.



Participants included high-level representatives of Libyan institutions and policy makers from the department of border management and migration, the ministries of defence, interior and labour, the coast guard as well as members of the House of Representatives.

The workshops, supported by the Order of Malta's Global Fund for Forgotten People, led by experts with extensive experience working with the UN, covered different sessions and aspects of migration and humanitarian law including reviewing the international legal architecture; human trafficking and smuggling; approaches to search and rescue at sea; and alternatives to detention. In the opening speech of the workshop, Albrecht Boeselager, Grand Chancellor of the Order of Malta, said: "The Order of Malta has always emphasised the need to place prin-

ciples of human dignity and human rights at the centre of any discussion. Protecting the rights of the vulnerable - often subject to discrimination and persecution - remains an imperative at a time when the logic of power, nationalism and populism is growing at the expense of the logic of dialogue."

The training course, delivered in English and Arabic, was welcomed by Libyan participants and areas for future cooperation were identified to build on the course. It was viewed as highly valuable that the training workshops had engaged with a diversity of government ministries that are all working to address the migration challenge. Ultimately, it was acknowledged by Libyan officials that a more peaceful and secure Libya will provide a better context through which to address the challenges of migration in Libya.

# IGNITING GLOBAL IMPACT FOR AN ANCIENT MISSION

Interview with

**Lisa Sanchez-Corea Simpson**

*Founder and Chief Executive, The Global Fund for Forgotten People*

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**The Global Fund for Forgotten People expands capacity and heightens impact for the Order of Malta's worldwide work. It facilitates donors' support and effective distribution of funds to the Order's projects around the world**

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## **What is the role of the Global Fund for Forgotten People?**

The Global Fund for Forgotten People was established to enable members and friends of the Order of Malta to support its global humanitarian work in a targeted, transparent and tax-efficient way. Our flexibility is the key: we remain in tune with programme leadership, giving us razor-sharp insight into the realities on the ground and keeping us agile to respond to need as it arises. The Fund fuels the Order of Malta's mission, collaborating with the Order's humanitarian programmes for sustainability, effectiveness and best practice, and making this network of projects available to international donors.

## **The Fund has made over 500 grants, can you describe the work supported?**

It is a kaleidoscope of hope and service. Just to provide some numbers, we have helped over 150,000 forgotten children grow up healthy and receive an education. Our support has brought 7,500 disabled young people joyful memories and friends for life. Our grants have brought sustenance and companionship to 15,000 elderly people. Over 150 of our grants have innovated new areas of Order of Malta work, each guided by insights garnered elsewhere in the field. Others represent investment in established activities - the West African hospitals of Ordre de Malte France, the global work of Malteser International – but many focus on unlocking the potential of small neighbourhood soup kitchens, elderly clubs and kindergartens.





We make medical care a possibility for thousands of the poorest people around the world, and we hear stories from individuals whose lives have been transformed by the daily commitment of the Order's grassroots community works. This range reflects the Order's unique character, and maintaining it is vital to preserving our strength and presence.

**What can the Order of Malta's work offer to private donors?**

The Order's programmes are a potent tool for social change; both attuned to contemporary need and informed by centuries of experience. We respond to local challenges with global resources. Our political neutrality summons significant trust at institutional and human levels. Many of our programmes are volunteer-run, making them highly efficient in confronting social problems. Wherever a donor wishes to

help, the Order is likely already there, serving with dedication and authentic love.

**You describe the Fund as a catalyst in the Order. Can you explain that?**

The Fund ignites innovation and collaboration between Order of Malta entities. Working closely with a range of Order programmes, together endeavouring to unlock conversations and provide fresh solutions. Our broad network lets us collaborate with grantees and share technology, fundraising and communications techniques to promote sustainability for our partners, supporting them to remain able to meet the evolving needs of the poor and the suffering.

*For more information about the Global Fund for Forgotten People of the Order of Malta: [www.forgottenpeople.org](http://www.forgottenpeople.org)*

## Section 3

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# THE ORDER OF MALTA'S VOICE IN THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA

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Humanitarian diplomacy, multilateralism and inter-religious dialogue are fundamental keys to ensuring respect for and protection of people, their dignity and their freedom. The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted even more the need for close cooperation between all the actors on the international political stage as they face global threats.

The Order of Malta will continue to make its voice heard and to exercise its credibility in the international community in defence of those who cannot.



# ADAPTING OUR HUMANITARIAN AND DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS

**Albrecht Boeselager**

*Grand Chancellor*

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**The mission of the Order of Malta has remained strong and solid throughout the many different emergencies humanity is facing. Among these, the one I consider the most pressing is the fight against poverty**

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When the first indications of a hitherto unknown virus emerged in the world news services, nobody thought how deeply it would mark the years 2020 and 2021 and how significantly it would change our lives and pose a severe threat to the global economy, and particularly to that of developing countries.

Covid-19 has brought great challenges, but it has also enabled us to rediscover the values of solidarity, of sharing, of generosity and of mercy. Many people of good will are engaged – in the fields of health, welfare, and charity – in taking care of those struck down by the virus, assisting the most needy and alleviating the sufferings of the very many who live in pain.

The Order of Malta, with its centuries-old experience and a humanitarian mission unceasingly performed in many situations and conditions, has adapted its actions to the present emergency.

At central government level, the sudden death of the 80th Grand Master, Fra' Giacomo Dalla Torre, followed by the assumption of the role of Head of the Order by Fra' Ruy Gonçalo do Valle Peixoto de Villas-Boas first and then the election in November 2020 of Fra' Marco Luzzago as Lieutenant of the Grand Master, posed a challenge in maintaining the consistent activity of the central bodies. And this was especially at a time characterised by the pandemic, with the consequent difficulties in travelling and with the lockdowns imposed by the various governments.

Our international activities, both diplomatic and humanitarian, were remodelled. Diplomatic meetings and gatherings were cancelled for almost a year. The work of our ambassadors in the more than 130 bilateral and multilateral diplomatic missions became very challenging. Everything was done by phone and videoconferences. At the operational and humanitarian level, the Order of Malta's Grand Priorities, national Associations, Embassies and Volunteer and Relief Corps have made a great and praiseworthy effort. On the diplomatic and scientific front, the Order of Malta has helped to promote a better knowledge of the virus and of containment measures and therapies, especially for those countries whose health systems are weak.

Amongst the Sovereign Order of Malta's traditional tasks are migration issues - including providing medical and lifesaving assistance in their countries of origin, in transit and at destination - promoting human dignity and monitoring human trafficking. International crime is heavily involved in this abhorrent practice. The poorest regions of Africa, Eastern Europe, Latin

America and South-East Asia are the worst affected by the criminal phenomenon of modern slavery. Enhancing the knowledge of humanitarian laws has been added in recent years to our agenda.

The situation in the Middle East in general, and in the Holy Land in particular, is of major concern. Too many Christians have left the region. Thanks to Malteser International we are present particularly in Iraq, with the Nineveh programme to support the return of the internally displaced persons (IDPs) who had left their homes, fleeing from the violence that was threatening the region. In Syria we have been providing medical aid to local partners since the beginning of the war ten years ago. In Lebanon our Association is increasingly

committed to ensuring health care for everyone in need, in spite of the huge difficulties the country is facing. In Palestine our Holy Family Hospital has shown once more its paramount care and concern for the population in representing a safe haven for mothers and infants, some of whom are born prematurely or with congenital conditions.

The mission of the Order of Malta remains strong and solid throughout the many different emergencies humanity is facing. Among these, the one I consider the most pressing is the fight against poverty, to restore dignity to millions of people living below the minimum subsistence level in countries that are becoming increasingly fragile and vulnerable, especially after Covid-19.





## The pandemic has exacerbated the social divide

The corona virus makes no distinction between wealth and poverty. Whilst it represents a common transnational threat, the same cannot be said for its far-reaching social and economic impact. The consequences of the pandemic on the poor and the disadvantaged are disproportionate and have highlighted the growing inequalities that mark today's global society. Likewise, it is possible that the pandemic will itself exacerbate disparities in the way countries are managing the emergency, both in terms of the robustness of their health systems and of their governments' capacity to address a widening social gap.

Covid 19 has exposed inequalities both between and within countries. Poor health conditions, little or scarce access to health systems and inadequate living conditions are all factors that make communities more vulnerable to contagion. This is true for people living in slums and shanty towns where social distancing is an untenable measure, but also for many groups of people who easily fall off the radar: prisoners, migrants in refugee camps, the homeless sleeping in shelters and working on the street, families living in packed housing, the elderly in nursing homes, marginalised communities.

There is an alarming decline in the number of children receiving immunisation coverage around the world, because of the disruption caused by the pandemic. This is true in particular for African countries, where even before the pandemic immunisation coverage was stalling. It is estimated that dozens of life-saving vaccination campaigns are at risk, meaning there could be a resurgence of measles and other life-threatening diseases.

The closure of schools in many countries dealing with the pandemic has also laid bare the disparities between the rich and the poor. In countries overcome by violence and turmoil, such as South Sudan, school closure not only means children have no access to education, it also means they do not get what is often their only meal of the day. In Western industrialised countries it is the children from families with lower incomes, living in small apartments and with little access to online learning, who have been most affected by the closure of schools, which poses a real threat to their education and future.

It is also true that the health crisis is worsened by digital inequality. People with little or no access to online information cannot learn how to handle the disease, nor learn about the government's measures in dealing with it. People with low education levels and few digital skills also benefit less from the information which is often written in difficult medical language.



With unemployment figures on the rise globally, closure of businesses means that families are left with no income and entire economic sectors are at risk. For example, this is true for many ready-made garments (RMG) businesses. High street shops are shutting down all over Europe and the US with ripple effects on the economy of many developing countries, such as in Bangladesh where the RMG industry is a mainstay of the economy. Coupled with a faster robotic adoption in garment manufacturing production, this results in a decrease in certain labour sectors, with detrimental consequences for lower income populations.

The world is changing at high speed and so are the rules of economics. Rebalancing political agendas to prioritise health and social care among the economic policy objectives is mandatory for the future of humankind.

The pandemic will not be defeated until it is controlled in every corner of the world. While it is understandable that world leaders want to protect their own populations first, the only truly effective response to the pandemic is a collective one. Therefore, making vaccines available in short time also to developing countries is an imperative.

This is an ethical and humanitarian issue, certainly, but it is also a matter of self-interest. Without a wide and equitable distribution of the vaccine, the global pandemic will continue to hamper progress in leading to a global economic recovery and will widen global inequalities.

The progress science has made in finding in record time effective vaccines is a pivotal moment in history and should encourage us all to work even more towards global and fair solutions.

# OUR COMMITMENT TO INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

**Stefano Ronca**

*Secretary General for Foreign Affairs*

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**The Order of Malta's Compact 'Religions in Action' includes guidelines for the role that religious communities and religious institutions can play to promote human rights.**

**The Compact was presented at the G-20 Interfaith Forum in September 2021**

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In line with its enduring engagement in multilateral diplomacy, the Sovereign Order of Malta has recently joined the International Religious Freedom or Belief Alliance (IRFBA), a network of many countries working together to advance freedom of religion or belief around the world. Launched by the US State Department, the Alliance seeks to enhance global advocacy to protect the right to freedom of religion or belief, and to serve as a platform to better coordinate the efforts of governments, parliamentarians and civil society. The Order of Malta actively participates in the IRFBA Working Group on humanitarian aid.

## **A core human right**

We live in a world where intolerance, discrimination and all forms of exclusion are increasingly widespread and where extremism and fanaticism threaten our societies. At the IRFBA Ministerial Conference in November 2020, Grand Chancellor Albrecht Boeselager echoed this when he stated that "freedom of religion or belief is a core human right: it pertains to inner sentiments, personal convictions and the cultural roots of each individual."

The role of faith-based institutions in advancing freedom of religion or belief is paramount. Because of its religious background, its impartiality and neutrality and its lack of political or economic agenda, the Order of Malta is a solid and respected player in the promotion of interfaith dialogue and inter-religious understanding.

In the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Order of Malta has been active in its support to counter efforts aimed at curtailing core fundamental rights, such as the right to practise religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching, which have led to discrimination and violence in some communities. A vivid example is the Order's work in Lebanon, which demonstrates its capacity to promote inter-faith dialogue. The Order's Association is probably the only organisation which entertains good relations with all eighteen confessions in Lebanon.

The Sovereign Order of Malta has been actively engaged over several years in promoting concern for these issues. In 2015, together with its diplomatic mission to the United Nations in Geneva, it organised an international symposium, 'Religions in Action.' Several representatives from the main monotheistic religions participated in the one-day event, held at the United Nations, which launched the Order of Malta's engagement in the process and led to the World Humanitarian Summit.





### **Humanity, solidarity, democracy**

The Grand Chancellor was in virtual attendance at the United Nations General Assembly in New York in September 2020, as was every Chief of State and Government. His speech centred on the importance of overcoming the present crisis on multilateralism and of the dangerous decline in values such as humanity, solidarity, and democracy.

The recent draft of the Order of Malta Compact 'Religions in Action' is based on the shared key principles of the monotheist religions, drawn up with the contribution of a select group of religious experts, Christians and Muslims. The document includes guidelines for the role religious communities and religious institutions can play to inspire respect for human rights, to help resolve crisis situations and mitigate

their effect on the communities involved.

The Compact was officially presented in a multilateral context: the G-20 Interfaith Forum, held in September 2021 in Bologna under the G-20 Italian Presidency. The Order has been invited to this prestigious event on the strength of its genuine commitment to interreligious dialogue and humanitarian cooperation with other faiths.

Multilateral diplomacy is a keystone of the Order's diplomatic strategy. It is with multilateral institutions like the United Nations and the G-20 that relatively small states or entities like the Order of Malta can effectively reassert their principles and values. The Order of Malta is an institution 'punching above its weight'. This is especially evident in multilateral diplomacy.

# 25 YEARS OF HUMANITARIAN DIPLOMACY IN THE UN

**Paul Beresford-Hill**

*Ambassador and Permanent Observer to the United Nations*

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**The Sovereign Order  
of Malta's presence at the  
United Nations is a precious  
gift, because it permits,  
even encourages, the voice  
of humanitarian care**

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When the Sovereign Order of Malta was granted Permanent Observer Status at the United Nations in New York in August 1994, it was with the support of many nations who cited the 900 years of philanthropic history of the Order, and its ongoing efforts to alleviate sickness and suffering around the world, as attributes worthy of such status.

The past 25 years have seen a dramatic growth in the work of the Order and an escalation in human need. Our United Nations involvement allows us to keep a close watch on global issues, and to maintain contact with countries that are recipients of our help as well as those which contribute to the work we do. We operate in close coordination with United Nations agencies to ensure appropriate levels of response to civil crises and natural disasters. Our participation is critical to our ability to respond rapidly to developing global situations.



We have a voice at United Nations deliberations, particularly when they concern human rights and humanitarian issues. Over the years, the Order's Ambassadors and members of the Mission in New York, often joined by the Grand Chancellor and the Grand Hospitaller, have made numerous interventions in the General Assembly, to its standing committees and United Nations agencies. We have been, and continue to be, a consistent participant in discussions around such concerns as peacekeeping, the Sustainable Development Goals, human trafficking, biodiversity, climate change, refugee and migrant issues and religious freedom, among many others. Among the highlights of our 25 years of involvement with the United Nations in New York was a 900th Anniversary Reception we hosted on May 9th 2013. The event was attended by several hundred ambassadors, delegates and representa-

tives including the then United Nations Secretary General, Ban Ki-Moon. The Secretary General spoke warmly of the contribution being made by the Sovereign Order in the field of humanitarian assistance in over one hundred countries, through the Order's extensive international network of medical and socio-medical community centres and over 120,000 trained volunteers and medical personnel.

The Sovereign Order of Malta's presence at the United Nations is a precious gift, because it permits, even encourages, the voice of humanitarian care to be heard above the political fray that too often dominates the conversation. The Order presents a message of solidarity to the global community and a commitment to stand at the forefront of service for, and on behalf of, the forgotten people of our world and those who are left behind.

### A growing presence on the international stage



#### **Marie-Thérèse Pictet-Althann**

*Ambassador and Permanent Observer to the UN in Geneva*

Geneva, the world's principal hub of multilateral diplomacy, is host to the United Nations, 40 International Organisations and 750 NGOs. Bringing together thousands of delegates and experts, it is one of the foremost centres of global governance.

This environment offers a unique platform for the Sovereign Order of Malta to engage actively in international affairs. Since becoming a Permanent Observer to the United Nations General Assembly in 1994, the activities and the scope of the Permanent Observer Mission of the Sovereign Order of Malta to the United Nations Office and International Organisations in Geneva have steadily increased, allowing us to participate in all kinds of events and debates.

#### **Multilateral humanitarian diplomacy**

The main organisations with which the Order of Malta cooperates around the world have their headquarters here. The areas of expertise of particular interest to the Order of Malta are peace, security, humanitarian action, human rights, migration, refugees, health, the environment and sustainable development.

Hence, we emphasise the Order's role as a global humanitarian actor and we collaborate with diplomatic, cultural and human rights actors. As religion has become a central topic on today's policy agenda, we are increasingly able to integrate the religious component into our multilateral humanitarian diplomacy. This evolution allows the Sovereign Order of Malta to contribute to the advancement of freedom of religion or belief and inter-faith dialogue.

Furthermore, at the United Nations in Geneva there is a very active women ambassadors' group, where there are some 40 Heads of Mission who cooperate to support the empowerment of women. The fact that the Order is represented by a female ambassador illustrates its aim to contribute to gender equality.

# Government of the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of Saint John of Jerusalem of Rhodes and of Malta

## Lieutenant of the Grand Master

**H.E. Fra' Marco Luzzago**

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H.E. Fra' Ruy Gonçalo do Valle Peixoto  
de Villas-Boas

**Grand Commander**

H.E. Albrecht Freiherr von Boeselager

**Grand Chancellor**

H.E. Dominique Prince  
de La Rochefoucauld-Montbel

**Grand Hospitaller**

H.E. János Graf Esterházy de Galántha

**Receiver of the Common Treasure**

## Sovereign Council Members

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H.E. Fra' John T. Dunlap

H.E. Fra' Emmanuel Rousseau

H.E. Fra' Gottfried von Kühnelt-Leddihn

H.E. Fra' Roberto Viazzo

H.E. Winfried Graf Henckel von Donnersmarck

H.E. Mauro Bertero Gutiérrez

## Sovereign Council

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The Sovereign Council assists the Grand Master in the government of the Order. It is composed of the Grand Master, Grand Commander, Grand Chancellor, Grand Hospitaller and Receiver of the Common Treasure and six Council members. The Sovereign Council is called by the Grand Master and meets at the seat of the Order of Malta at least six times a year and whenever special circumstances require it.





#### **GOVERNMENT COUNCIL**

##### **Vice-President**

Péter Szabadhegyi de Csallóközmegyerics

##### **Councillors**

Olivier Freiherr von Loudon-Vorst-Gudenau

Francis Joseph McCarthy

Patrick Jabre

Lady Celestria Hales

José Maria Coello de Portugal

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Dominikus Freiherr von und zu Mentzingen

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Justin S. Simpson

Gérald Berger

Paolo Fabris de Fabris

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Duc de La Roche-Guyon

Luca Brondelli, dei Conti di Brondello

#### **PRELATE**

Msgr. Jean Laffitte

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Ulrich von Glaunach zum Kazenstain

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Dominik Brichta

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Stefano Ronca

#### **JURIDICAL COUNCIL**

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Prof. Avv. Arturo Maresca

##### **Vice-President**

Prof. Damiano Nocilla

##### **Secretary General**

Prof. Avv. Paolo Papanti Pelletier de Bermigny

##### **Members**

Prof. Avv. Giancarlo Perone

Prof. Avv. Leonardo Perrone

#### **MAGISTRAL COURT OF APPEAL**

##### **President**

Prof. Avv. Arturo Maresca

##### **Judges**

Prof. Avv. Leonardo Perrone

Avv. Massimo Massella Ducci Teri

Prof. Avv. Pietro Sirena

#### **MAGISTRAL COURT OF FIRST INSTANCE**

##### **President**

Prof. Avv. Paolo Papanti Pelletier de Bermigny

##### **Judges**

Prof. Avv. Venerando Marano

Prof. Avv. Paolo Morozzo della Rocca

Prof. Avv. Arnaldo Morace Pinelli

##### **Chancellor of the Magistral Courts**

Col. Alessandro Bianchi

#### **COMMISSION FOR THE PROTECTION OF NAMES AND EMBLEMS**

##### **President**

Fra' John T. Dunlap

## The Order's diplomatic relations worldwide

### THE ORDER OF MALTA HAS DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH 110 COUNTRIES:

#### EUROPE

Albania, Austria, Belarus, Bosnia- Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, Holy See, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malta, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation (through a diplomatic special mission), San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Ukraine.

#### THE AMERICAS

Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Uruguay, Venezuela.

#### ASIA

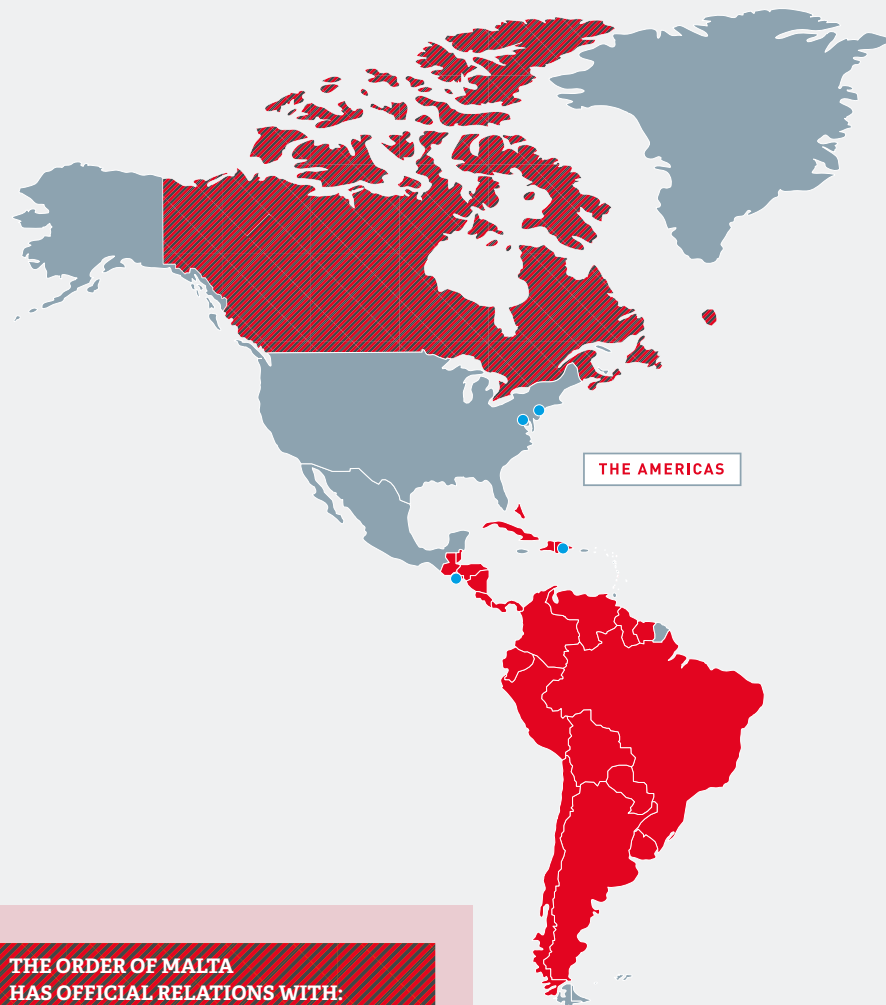
Afghanistan, Armenia, Cambodia, Georgia, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Philippines, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Turkmenistan.

#### AFRICA

Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cap Vert, Central Africa, Chad, Comoros, Congo (Democratic Republic of the), Congo (Republic of the), Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Togo.

#### OCEANIA

Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru.



### THE ORDER OF MALTA HAS OFFICIAL RELATIONS WITH:

Belgium, Canada, France, Luxembourg, Switzerland

### THE ORDER OF MALTA HAS RELATIONS AT AMBASSADOR LEVEL WITH:

Palestine

### THE ORDER OF MALTA HAS PERMANENT OBSERVER MISSIONS TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND ITS SPECIALISED AGENCIES:

**United Nations** - New York

**United Nations** - Geneva

**United Nations** - Vienna

**ESCAP** - United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (Bangkok)

**FAO** - Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (Rome)

**IAEA** - International Atomic Energy Agency (Vienna)

**IFAD** - International Fund for Agricultural Development (Rome)

**UNEP** - United Nations Environment Programme (Nairobi)

**UNESCO** - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Paris)

**UNHCHR** - United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (Geneva)

**UNHCR** - United Nations High

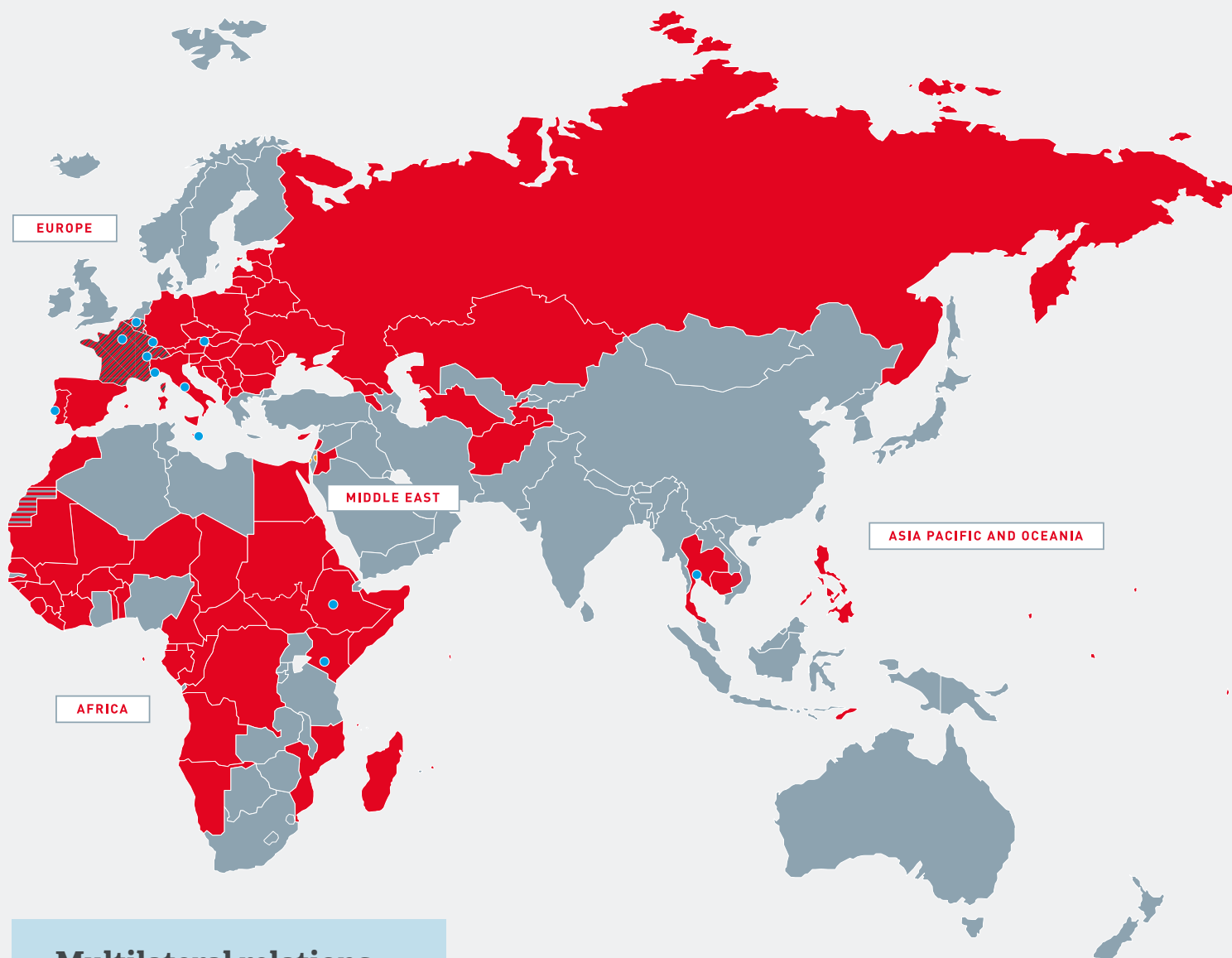
Commissioner for Refugees (Geneva)

**UNIDO** - United Nations Industrial Development Organization (Vienna)

**UNODC** - UN Office for Drugs and Crime (Vienna)

**WFP** - World Food Programme of the United Nations (Rome)

**WHO** - World Health Organization (Geneva)



## Multilateral relations

### THE ORDER OF MALTA HAS RELATIONS AT AMBASSADOR LEVEL WITH:

European Union

### ORDER OF MALTA HAS DELEGATIONS OR REPRESENTATIONS TO INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS:

**AU** - African Union (Addis Ababa)

**COE** - Council of Europe (Strasbourg)

**CPLP** - Community of Portuguese Language Countries (Lisbon)

**CTBTO** - Preparatory Commission for the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban Treaty Organization (Vienna)

**ICCROM** - International Centre for the study of the preservation and restoration of cultural property (Rome)

**ICMM** - International Committee of Military Medicine (Brussels)

**ICRC** - International Committee of the Red Cross (Geneva)

**IDB** - Inter-American Development Bank (Washington D.C.)

**IDLO** - International Development Law Organization (Rome)

**IIHL** - International Institute of Humanitarian Law (Sanremo, Geneva)

**IFRC** - International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (Geneva)

**IOC** - Indian Ocean Commission (Port Louis, Mauritius)

**IOF** - International Organization of La Francophonie (Paris)

**IOM** - International Organization for Migration (Geneva)

**PAM** - Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (Malta)

**SICA** - Central American Integration System (San Salvador)

**UNIDROIT** - International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (Rome)

**UNILAT** - Latin Union (Santo Domingo, Paris)

# STATE AND OFFICIAL VISITS

## 2021

### **HOLY SEE, 25 June**

The Lieutenant of the Grand Master Fra' Marco Luzzago is received in audience by Pope Francis in the Private Library of the Apostolic Palace in the Vatican. The meeting is an opportunity to illustrate the main initiatives the Order of Malta put in place in recent months, in particular with regards to the pandemic. Pope Francis expresses his support by saying: "I love you, I am with you, go forth".

### **LATVIA, 11 May**

The excellent relations between Latvia and the Order of Malta are confirmed on 11 May, when the President of the Republic of Latvia, Egils Levits, is received by the Lieutenant of the Grand Master Fra' Marco Luzzago in the Magistral Villa in Rome. The official meeting is attended also by Cardinal Silvano Maria Tomasi, the Pope's Special



Delegate to the Order of Malta. During the meeting a memorandum of understanding is signed, committing the parties to further develop cooperation in the humanitarian, social, educational and cultural fields.

### **ITALY, 2 March**

On the occasion of the ceremony for the 92nd anniversary of the Lateran Treaty between Italy and the Holy See, the Grand Chancellor of the Sovereign Order of Malta Albrecht Boeselager

1. Fra' Marco Luzzago with His Holiness Pope Francis, Vatican
2. Fra' Marco Luzzago with Egils Levits, Latvia
3. Albrecht Boeselager with Janos Ader, Hungary
4. Albrecht Boeselager with Sergio Mattarella, Italy
5. Fra' Giacomo Dalla Torre with George Wella, Malta
6. Fra' Giacomo Dalla Torre with Patrice Talon, Benin
7. Fra' Giacomo Dalla Torre with Rumén Radev, Bulgaria



meets the President of the Italian Republic Sergio Mattarella. The meeting takes place at Palazzo Borromeo, seat of the Italian Embassy to the Holy See and to the Sovereign Order of Malta.

## 2020

### **ESTONIA, 11 March**

The Sovereign Order of Malta and Estonia formally establish bilateral diplomatic relations. At the Magistral Palace, Rome, Ambassador Stefano Ronca, Secretary General for Foreign Affairs, receives Celia Kuningas-Saagpakk, Ambassador of Estonia to Italy, for the exchange of notes verbales.

### **HUNGARY, 13 February**

On the 30th anniversary of the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between Hungary and the Order of Malta, the Grand Chancellor Albrecht Boselager receives the President of the Republic, Janos Áder, at the Magistral Palace. The meeting confirms the excellent relations which over the years have made the Order of Malta's relief corps, Magyar Máltai Szeretetszolgálat (MMSz), one of the major health and welfare organisations in Hungary.

### **MALTA, 3 February**

Many topics of mutual interest are discussed during the meeting in the Magistral Palace between the President



of the Republic of Malta, George Vella, and the Grand Master of the Sovereign Order of Malta, Fra' Giacomo Dalla Torre. The deep historical and cultural ties and the excellent diplomatic relations established in 1966 have guaranteed and still guarantee today a seamless and fruitful cooperation in the socio-health and cultural spheres.

### **BENIN, 22-24 January**

The official visit of Grand Master Fra' Giacomo Dalla Torre to the Republic of Benin starts with a meeting with the President of the Republic, Patrice Talon. The President praises the Order of Malta's commitments in his country, stressing the quality of the services provided in

the hospital in Djougou, run by Ordre de Malte France since 1974 and described as 'an authentic centre of excellence'.

## 2019

### **BULGARIA, 11-12 December**

The Grand Master of the Sovereign Order of Malta, Fra' Giacomo Dalla Torre, is received on a State Visit to Sofia by the President of the Republic of Bulgaria, Rumen Radev. The ongoing excellent cooperation between Bulgaria and the Order of Malta – supported by 25 years of diplomatic relations – has allowed the Order of Malta's embassy to develop numerous medical and so-





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cial programmes in all regions of the country. The Grand Master is also most pleased to meet with the Patriarch of the Orthodox Church in Bulgaria, Neophyte, and the Grand Mufti, Mustafa Hadzhi.

#### **UNESCO, 13 November**

Grand Master Fra' Giacomo Dalla Torre is received by the Director General of Unesco, Audrey Azoulay, and addresses the 40th General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in Paris.

#### **LITHUANIA, 8 November**

The President of the Republic of Lithuania Gitanas Nausėda and First Lady Diana Nausėdienė are received by Grand Master Fra' Giacomo Dalla Torre at the Magistral Palace, Rome. The President expresses his appreciation for the Order of Malta's work in his country and the Grand Master thanks the Lithuanian authorities for their constant support. Malteser Lithuania was established in 1991. With over 1,500 volunteers, it provides social services in 40 towns around the country.

#### **GERMANY, 14-17 October**

The first official visit of a Grand Master of the Sovereign Order of Malta to Germany following the establishment of diplomatic relations in October 2017 takes place in Berlin. Fra' Giacomo Dalla Torre is received by the Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier and visits the Bundestag to meet with President Wolfgang Schäuble.

#### **ECUADOR, 24 September**

The Sovereign Order of Malta and the Republic of Ecuador resume the exchange of ambassadors. At the Magistral Palace, the Grand Chancellor of the Sovereign Order of Malta, Albrecht Boeselager, receives the Ambassador of the Republic of Ecuador to the Holy See, José Luis Alvarez Palacio. Diplomatic relations with Ecuador were established in 1953.

#### **MAURITIUS, 6-9 September**

The Grand Hospitaller Dominique de La Rochefoucauld-Montbel takes part in the Holy Father's pastoral visit to Mauritius: with the opportunity for meetings with state authorities to promote the humanitarian activities of the Order and, particularly, the development of the 'first aid group' of the Order of Malta's volunteers in the national Civil Protection system.

#### **PERU, 12-14 August**

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Néstor Francisco Popolizio Bardales, receives

1. Fra' Giacomo Dalla Torre at Unesco
2. Fra' Giacomo Dalla Torre with Gitanas Nausėda, Lithuania
3. Fra' Giacomo Dalla Torre with Borut Pahor, Slovenia
4. Fra' Giacomo Dalla Torre with Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Germany
5. Dominique de La Rochefoucauld-Montbel with Juan Carlos Varela Rodriguez, Panama
6. Fra' Giacomo Dalla Torre with Mahmoud Abbas, Palestine



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the Grand Chancellor Albrecht Boeselager in Lima. Topics discussed during their meeting cover the Order of Malta's social and humanitarian projects in Peru, the humanitarian challenge represented by the Venezuelan refugees in the country and the involvement of Malteser Peru volunteers in natural disaster relief.

#### **HOLY SEE, 28 June**

In the Vatican Fra' Giacomo Dalla Torre is received in audience by Pope Francis. The Grand Master recounts to His Holiness some examples from the wide range of help carried out by the Order - testimonies to the continuing commitment to assist society's most vulnerable.

#### **SLOVENIA, 14-17 June**

The Grand Master is received by the President of the Republic of Slovenia, Borut Pahor. In Ljubljana, after a wreath-laying ceremony at the Monument to the Victims of All Wars, the



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President of Slovenia and Fra' Giacomo Dalla Torre discuss cooperation in the social and humanitarian sectors.

#### **PANAMA, 22-29 January**

In Panama, on the occasion of the 34th World Youth Day, the Grand Hospitaller meets Pope Francis, and also the President of the Republic Juan Carlos Varela Rodriguez, the Vice President and Minister of Foreign Affairs Isabel de Saint Malo de Alvarado and the Minister for Health Miguel Mayo Di Bello. The Order's volunteers, assembled from national Order Associations in the region, attend to those needing particular care.

## 2018

#### **PALESTINE, 3 December**

Mahmoud Abbas, President of the State of Palestine, is received by Fra' Giacomo Dalla Torre. The Grand Master recalls the Order of Malta's commitment in Palestine, which is confirmed "by the important daily work carried out in the Holy Family Hospital in Bethlehem, a benchmark for neonatal intensive care throughout the region." President Mahmoud Abbas expresses his appreciation "...for the Order of Malta's important initiatives in the medical sector in Palestine, and for your ability to contribute to peace by building bridges."



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# INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS

## **United Nations Human Rights Council 46<sup>th</sup> Session**

*Geneva, 22-23 February 2021*

Grand Chancellor Albrecht Boeselager addresses the United Nations Human Rights Council stating that “The Covid-19 pandemic - with its devastating effects on the health and economy of many nations – adds to global tensions and conflicts, the growing problems of famine, environment degradation, the issue of refugees and those fleeing war, terrorism and hunger and the many forms of violence that humiliate and offend human dignity.”

## **2020 Ministerial Conference to advance freedom of religion or belief**

*Warsaw, 16–17 November 2020*

The online conference is attended by representatives of almost 60 states and international organisations, including ministers of foreign affairs, deputy foreign ministers, and special envoys for freedom of religion. Participants from the Sovereign Order of Malta include the Grand Chancellor Albrecht Boeselager, Ambassador Stefano Ronca and the Ambassador to Poland, Niels Carl A. Lorijn.

## **Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on coronavirus disease**

*New York, 3-4 December 2020*

The Grand Hospitaller Dominique de

La Rochefoucauld-Montbel addresses the United Nations General Assembly on the Order of Malta's experience, involvement and lessons learned in the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic.

## **75<sup>th</sup> United Nations General Assembly**

*New York, 15-28 September 2020*

In his statement to the 75th session of the United Nations General Assembly - the first ever to be organised remotely - the Grand Chancellor, Albrecht Boeselager, declares “...multilateralism has consolidated the protection of all persons, human dignity and freedom of religion.” But he warns against “...the risk of a return to the logic of power, nationalism, and populism prevailing over the logic of dialogue.”

## **Consultation on climate crisis and displacement or migration**

*Vatican, 7 July 2020*

Discussions centre around how the Church and religious institutions are addressing the challenges posed by climate crisis and its effect on migration, and examine what action should be taken in order to respond more effectively to the growing needs of displaced populations. The Diplomatic Adviser to the Order of Malta, Ambassador Giuseppe Morabito, participates in the Consultation, organised by the Migrants and Ref-

ugees Section of the Integral Human Development Vatican Dicastery.

## **Middle East meeting**

*Rome, 27 February 2020*

Ambassadors of the Order of Malta, Presidents of the national Associations, and the heads of Malteser International and Ordre de Malte France operating in the Middle East meet in Rome with the government of the Order to discuss how to scale up humanitarian response in the regions in the Middle East which are affected by violence.

## **Munich Security Conference**

*Munich, 14-16 February 2020*

The Grand Chancellor, Albrecht Boeselager, takes part in the Munich Security Conference 2020, attended by more than 30 heads of government and heads of state as well as 100 cabinet ministers. The Agenda's key issues cover the role of Europe and how to enhance its reach worldwide, the rise of nationalisms, climate change, and global health hazards.

## **9<sup>th</sup> Asia Pacific Conference**

*Melbourne, 22-24 November 2019*

Some 100 delegates, representing the Order of Malta's central government and entities in South East Asia and Australia, come together for three intense days of meetings to analyse the current sit-



uation regarding the Order's activities in the region, to establish priorities and standardise procedures.

### **Conference against sexual trafficking**

*Paris, 8 October 2019*

The Sovereign Order of Malta organises the Conference 'How better to fight sexual trafficking of women in West Africa and support their rehabilitation', bringing together experts, diplomats, academics, policy makers, representative of European and Nigerian institutions, Catholic organisations, congregations of nuns, and psychosocial counsellors. The Conference takes place at the French Institute of International Relations, Paris.

### **Russia and Order of Malta**

*Moscow, 18 June 2019*

The monograph *Russia and the Order of Malta. 1697-1817* is launched in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Moscow, in the presence of the Russian Foreign Minister, Sergei Lavrov. The volume bears witness to the intense relationship between the Order of Malta and Russia over the centuries, which, as Minister Lavrov declares, continues to be "multifaceted, friendly and fruitful." The French edition of the book is launched in November in Rome.

### **23<sup>rd</sup> International Hospitaller Conference**

*Rome, 21-24 March 2019*

Some 80 Hospitallers attend the annual Conference from all corners of the world. The 2019 Conference is held at the St. John Baptist Hospital complex in Rome, run by the Order of Malta's Italian Association. The Hospitallers discuss key issues and actions, from the tragic situation in Venezuela to the impact of climate change; from the networks created by the Order's young members to the fundamental importance of communications and crowd-funding.

### **Global Compact for migration**

*Marrakesh, 10-11 December 2018*

A delegation of the Sovereign Order of Malta, led by the Grand Chancellor, participates in the Marrakesh Summit to approve the Global Compact, the agreement prepared under the auspices of the United Nations which establishes the guidelines for global migration management politics and strategies.

### **8<sup>th</sup> Asia Pacific Conference**

*Manila, 15-18 November 2018*

50 representatives of the Order of Malta's central government, national Asso-

ciations and delegations from Australia, Philippines, Singapore, Hong Kong, East Timor, Thailand and South Korea, gather in Alfonso, south of Manila, Philippines. Participants take stock of the developments in health and humanitarian activities in the region and of projects developed in Asia by Malteser International, the Order's international relief service, Ciomal (the Order of Malta international organisation against leprosy) and the Global Fund for Forgotten People.

### **Panel against human trafficking**

*Geneva, 18 October 2018*

On European Anti-Trafficking day, the Mission of the Sovereign Order of Malta to the United Nations in Geneva organises a conference focussing on how to improve measures to combat human trafficking. Michel Veuthey, the Order's Ambassador against Trafficking in Persons, describes and discusses the global efforts of the Order of Malta.

### **17<sup>th</sup> International Summit 'Francophonie'**

*Yerevan, 2-12 October 2018*

The Grand Hospitaller, Dominique de La Rochefoucauld-Montbel, takes part in the 'Francophonie Summit' in Yerevan, Armenia.

# TURNING INTENTIONS INTO TANGIBLE ACTIONS

**Ivo Graziani**

*Chief of Cabinet of the Grand Hospitaller*

Treaties between states or governments are an ancient tool of cooperation. The first were certainly stipulated for military alliances or commercial agreements. In modern diplomacy these tools have been reinterpreted: for instance, the ceremony of presentation of Credential Letters of newly appointed Ambassadors aims more at knowing each other and discussing points of common interest, rather than at certifying their identity.

Since the loss of the island of Malta, the Order has kept its sovereignty through treaties, agreements and exchange of diplomatic recognition. Cooperation Agreements have become a means to deepen those relations, which from a piece of paper turn into tangible actions.

As law sources are considered to have a pyramid structure, so are the Agreements stipulated, negotiated and signed by the Sovereign Order of Malta and its partner countries. On top,

there is the opening of diplomatic relations, followed by the Cooperation Agreement and finally by the implementation of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) or technical agreements, signed between ministries or specialised agencies of a country and local entities of the Order, such as Grand Priorities, Associations and relief corps.

Negotiations with the relevant ministry balance on some central points: the Order's counterpart is, usually, at the top - the Ambassador accredited to the Sovereign Order of Malta, who depends directly from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This Ministry has to obtain, through internal procedures, the validation of the other ministries concerned, such as the Ministry of Finance for tax exemption for the works and projects of the Order, or the Ministry of Justice for the protection and privileges granted to cooperation staff. The same happens within the Order, in the cooperation between the Grand Chancellor and the Grand Hospitaller. Negotiations can be carried out either through face-to-face meetings or written correspondence.





As soon as all concerned ministries have given their nihil obstat, the Cooperation Agreement is ready to be signed. After the ceremony of official signature, the Agreement must be ratified by the Sovereign Council of the Order of Malta and then it enters into force. The counterpart countries follow their national legislation, sometimes by a parliamentary ratification to become a national law, sometimes by a vote or a presentation at the national executive Government level.

#### **An effective will to act**

Each Cooperation Agreement is unique as it has to be adapted to the needs of the country, the relationship with the Order and the possible implementation of projects. The Order of Malta's government follows the Kelsen principle of short constitutions, as those laws must be short and be more focused on protecting rights than on regulating specific aspects, which are left to technical agreements.

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**In practice, the more than 50 Cooperation Agreements signed by the Order have contributed to enhance cooperation and have often contributed to developing the works of the Order in the country of signature**

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Nonetheless, a certain flexibility is usually granted for possible amendments by diplomatic tools, such as Verbal Notes.

In practice, the more than 50 Cooperation Agreements signed by the Order have contributed to enhance cooperation and have often contributed to developing the works of the Order in the country of signature.

The double dimension of these Agreements is clear: on the one hand, it is to deepen the relationship with the countries with which the Order already has diplomatic relations, thus strengthening the rights and the sovereignty of the Order itself; and on the other, it is to develop the works and projects of the Order of Malta in the concerned country, but only provided that this enhancement will

actually take place: Cooperation Agreements are not signed just as an intention like a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), but as an effective will to act.

# INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AGREEMENTS

## **LATVIA**

*11 May 2021*

A declaration of intent is signed between the Sovereign Order of Malta and the government of Latvia at the Magistral Villa, committing the parties to further develop cooperation in the humanitarian, social, educational and cultural fields, as well as to promote their postal-service partnership. The signatories are Jānis Bordāns, Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Latvia, and Grand Chancellor Albrecht Boeselager.

## **ITALY**

*29 September 2020*

A Cooperation Agreement for the safeguarding activities of human lives at sea is signed in Rome between the Italian Republic and the Sovereign Order of Malta. The Agreement strengthens cooperation in the medical and first-aid sectors within the context of search and rescue at sea. As a result of a series of bilateral Agreements, the Order of Malta's Italian Relief Corps has been carrying out search and rescue activities in the Mediterranean Sea since 2008 in close cooperation with the Italian authorities.

## **INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY**

*23 September 2020*

A high-level Cooperation Agreement between the Sovereign Order of Malta

and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is signed at the IAEA Headquarters in Vienna by the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Sovereign Order of Malta to the UN in Vienna, Günther A. Granser and the IAEA Director-General, Rafael Mariano Grossi. The Agreement establishes the framework for collaboration on outreach and resource mobilisation related to IAEA-supported activities in nuclear medicine, radiation medicine, radiation oncology, radiotherapy and palliative care. A concrete step in the battle against cancer in Albania is the Order's support for enhancing nuclear medicine and radiotherapy and improving patient and staff safety at Albania's main hospital. This enables the hospital to provide treatment for 1,350 cancer patients per year, representing 90 per cent of all treated radiotherapy patients in Albania.

## **HUNGARY**

*24 October 2019*

A Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen cooperation and response to the persecution of ethnic and religious minorities in crisis regions is signed in Budapest between the government of the Hungarian People's Republic and the Sovereign Order of Malta. The agreement has arisen because of the increasing number of acts of violence and persecution against minorities.

## **SLOVAKIA**

*13 September 2019*

The Grand Hospitaller of the Sovereign Order of Malta, Dominique de La Rochefoucauld-Montbel, signs a Memorandum of Understanding with the Minister of Health of the Slovak Republic, Andrea Kalavská, in Bratislava. Valid for a period of 15 years, the Memorandum will further strengthen the development and diversification of the Order of Malta's cooperation in the health services of the Slovak Republic. The Order's relief corps in Slovakia will cooperate in expanding medical education such as first aid and the training for professional staff.

## **HOLY SEE**

*11 September 2019*

An Agreement to intensify the collaboration between the department of the Grand Hospitaller of the Order of Malta and the Pontifical Council for Culture of the Holy See is signed in the Vatican. The collaboration, through the years, has led to numerous scientific and religious initiatives. Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi, President of the Council, declared: "This is an important synergy."

## **IVORY COAST**

*9 September 2019*

The Grand Hospitaller, Dominique de La Rochefoucauld-Montbel signs



in Abidjan a Cooperation Agreement with the Minister of Health and Public Hygiene, Aka Aouélé. The aim is to promote medical, social, educational and health care actions in Ivory Coast and to facilitate and expand the Order's initiatives in the country - for example, with an emphasis on training local staff, at the St John Baptist Hospital in Bodo.

## UKRAINE

*6 June 2019*

With the aim of increasing humanitarian aid in Ukraine, a Cooperation Agreement is signed at the Ministry of Social Policy, Kyiv, by Minister Andriy Reva and for the Sovereign Order of Malta, by Ambassador Antonio Gazzanti Pugliese di Cotrone. The Agreement will promote the medical, social, humanitarian, educational and health care actions of the Order of Malta in Ukraine.

## CAMBODIA

*15 March 2019*

The Order of Malta's Kien Khleang Leprosy Rehabilitation Centre (KKL-RC) in Phnom Penh is the main centre for the treatment of leprosy in Cambodia. In addition to free healthcare for those affected by leprosy and its complications, the Centre offers physiotherapy, dermatology and reconstructive surgery services. An Agreement which aims to reinforce the Centre's activities is signed between the Ministry of Health and CIOMAL (the Order of Malta Foundation specialised in Leprosy).

## PANAMA

*28 January 2019*

A Cooperation Agreement to enhance synergies in the health and food security sector, in disaster preparedness

and management and in voluntary humanitarian activities is signed in Panama City by the Order of Malta's Grand Hospitaller, Dominique de La Rochefoucauld-Montbel and Panama's Vice Minister for Multilateral Affairs and Cooperation, María Luisa Navarro.

## POLAND

*7 December 2018*

The Polish Minister of Health Lukasz Szumowski and the Sovereign Order of Malta's Grand Hospitaller, Dominique de La Rochefoucauld-Montbel, sign a Cooperation Statement in the Magistral Palace in Rome. It augments the capabilities of the Order of Malta's Polish Association and its relief corps to help the elderly, to organise first-aid courses, offer assistance during large events and to promote a healthy lifestyle.

## Section 4

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# NURTURING OUR SPIRITS AS WE PRAY FOR OUR LORDS THE SICK

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The pandemic has strained our souls. But it has also taught us to appreciate the essence of things, of love, of joy and of pain. In a time of grief, suffering, fear, isolation, faith gives us the strength to embrace the rest of the world and to be able to feel sincere compassion for those who suffer more than we do.



# CARDINAL SILVANO TOMASI IS THE POPE'S SPECIAL DELEGATE

**Antonio Zanardi Landi**

*Ambassador to the Holy See*

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**A life spent assisting migrants, first of all for the Scalabrinians Order, he has always taken care of education and aid for Italian migrants in America, and then in the numerous positions he has held in the diplomatic service of the Holy See**

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On 1 November 2020, Pope Francis appointed Cardinal Silvano Maria Tomasi CS, Apostolic Nuncio Emeritus, as Special Delegate to the Sovereign Order of Malta, interlocutor of the Order's government for the reform of the Constitutional Charter and Code. On 28 November 2020, during the Ordinary Public Consistory in St Peter's Basilica, Pope Francis raised him to the rank of cardinal and on 23 January 2021, Cardinal Tomasi took possession of the Diaconia of the church of San Nicola in Carcere in Rome, celebrating Holy Mass in this splendid historic church.

As Special Delegate, Silvano Maria Tomasi succeeded Cardinal Giovanni Angelo Becciu, who held the position from February 2017 to October 2020. The important commitment was then entrusted to the 80-year-old Scalabrinian prelate with a long career in diplomacy, including as Permanent Observer to the United Nations in Geneva, and more recently involved in the organisation of the newly created Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development. It was Cardinal Tomasi, in December 2014, who brought to the Vienna Conference the message in which Pope Francis 'shelved' the doctrine of deterrence, even going as far as defining not only the use but also the possession of nuclear weapons as ethically unacceptable.



His Eminence has led a life assisting migrants, first for the religious order to which he belongs, who have always taken care of education and aid for Italian migrants in America, and then in the numerous positions entrusted to him, including Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Migrants, Apostolic Nuncio to Eritrea and Somalia and then, for 13 years, Permanent Observer to the United Nations in Geneva.

## **To become an increasingly authentic witness**

In an interview given in February 2021 to two of the Order of Malta's periodicals in Italy - L'Orma and Impegno - concerning the Order's reform, Cardinal Tomasi explained: "The issues related to the reform are wide-ranging and detailed, be-



cause the renewal of the Order does not concern a particular aspect, and thus it must address it in its entirety. It is the whole Order that must regain a spiritual impetus of re-

juvenation that will lead it to be an increasingly authentic witness, both from the Christian point of view and in terms of its witness of charity.

**Silvano Maria Tomasi** was born in 1940 in Casoni di Musolente in the province of Vicenza. After studies in theology, social sciences and sociology in the United States, he was ordained on 31 May 1965 in the Congregation of the Missionaries of Saint Charles Borromeo. In 1989 he was appointed Secretary of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, and in 1996 Pope John Paul II appointed him Apostolic Nuncio to Ethiopia, Eritrea and later also to Djibouti. From 2003 to 2016, Cardinal Tomasi served as Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations Office and Specialised Institutions in Geneva, and as Permanent Observer to the

World Trade Organization. In 2011 he was also appointed representative of the Holy See to the International Organization for Migration. Between 2016 and 2017 he held the position of Secretary Delegate of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace until it was merged into the Dicastery for the Service of Integral Human Development. Cardinal Silvano Maria Tomasi was admitted to the Order of Malta as Chaplain Grand Cross of the Conventual Order in 2007. On 2 February 2021, in a ceremony in the Magistral Palace in Rome, the Lieutenant of the Grand Master, Fra' Marco Luzzago, awarded him the insignia of Bailiff Grand Cross of Honour and Devotion.

# COVID-19 TEACHES US TO TURN AWAY FROM SUPERFICIALITY

Interview with  
**Msgr. Jean Laffitte**  
*Prelate*

## **What has this pandemic meant for the Order of Malta?**

Like most of the population, the pandemic has brought about great changes for the Order of Malta - in the way it works, in its services and in all its activities. Many events have been cancelled or postponed to a still uncertain future. I am thinking of the international and national pilgrimages. For the second consecutive year we were unable to accompany our malades to Lourdes. The pilgrimage to the Holy Land has been postponed until 2022. I am also thinking of the international conferences scheduled on various continents, unique occasions for the

Grand Priorities and Associations to meet, as well as all the ordinary meetings conducted remotely. As for the Prelate's ministry, meetings with the Order's chaplains were also reduced. The impossibility of moving around has forced us to adapt to a condition never previously imagined. I would say that the whole Order of Malta family has found itself in a new situation, a real lack of means for performing its activities.

## **What does this difficult experience teach us?**

It teaches us that there is a fundamental vulnerability that everyone shares and which unites them. The members of our Order are no exception. It teaches us that we are all dependent on circumstances and events that are greater than us. We are all affected by this situation, collectively and individually. A test like this, marked by the daily rhythm of statistics on contagions and victims, causes concern to those around us, not only the elderly but also young people. It has been teaching us for more than a year now to turn away from all forms of superficiality, to focus on the essential, to feel true compassion for those who suffer more than us.

## **Two years without pilgrimages**

Having to give up our pilgrimages shows us how essential they are in the Order's life and in our personal existence. We all want these events that bring





us together to return. The lack of Lourdes, the Holy Land, Assisi or Loreto have shown us the profound sense of our Christian vocation and in particular our commitment to our lords the sick.

**Pope Francis said the pandemic is a great opportunity to recover authenticity**

This is exactly what it is. It invites us on an inner pilgrimage, to rediscover what constitutes the most profound dimension of our life. And to let ourselves be taught by what St. Bonaventure called the inner master. In solitude, in the pain of being restricted to a very limited form of immobile life, we discover another way of closeness to the sick and the poor, who are often in a condition of great dependence. A more interior way, I repeat, or more authentic, to cite the words of Pope Francis.

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**Pope Francis invites us on an interior pilgrimage to rediscover what constitutes the most profound dimension of our life**

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**What advice do you feel you can give?**

I would say that we can intensify the means at our disposal, the first of which is prayer. There is no lack of intentions for intercession. We often forget that if our organisation can be efficient, only union with God will make our service fruitful. Efficiency and fruitfulness are not the same thing. It is also important to keep in constant contact with all the members of our family. A determination to maintain contacts remotely, even if extremely frustrating, is a testimony of hope. We know we are living through difficult times, but sooner or later they will pass. Let me give an example: to inform our Associations of the progress of the Order's spiritual reform, we connect with each of their representatives worldwide. New bonds are created. We encourage each other and new initiatives are born for the future.

# CELEBRATIONS IN HONOUR OF BLESSED GERARD 900 YEARS AFTER HIS DEATH

**Fra' Ruy Gonalo do Valle Peixoto de Villas-Boas**

*Grand Commander*

Many historians claim Fra' Gerard was born in Scala, Italy, around 1040, and moved to Jerusalem where, in the second half of the 11th century, he became the head of the hospital built by Amalfi citizens to assist pilgrims who arrived in the Holy Land after long and difficult journeys. It was thanks to his charitable work and his charisma that Pope Paschal II - with his Bull of 15 February 1113 which was addressed to Fra' Gerard - transformed the brotherhood of religious who ran the hospital into a lay religious order of the Catholic Church, with the right to elect its superiors without interference from any other authority, lay or religious. Thus, Fra' Gerard was the founder and became the first Grand Master of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, today known as the Sovereign Order of Malta. He is recognised as Blessed by the Church.

Fra' Gerard's example – based on his founding motto *tuitio fidei et obsequium pauperum* (bearing witness to the faith and helping the poor) – has animated the Order of Malta's 900-year history. His character, his charism, his determination always to place himself at the service of the poor and the sick, seeing in them the face of our Lord, have inspired generations of members and volunteers, who are proud to follow his example, daily carrying out the commitment to alleviate human suffering.

In the Papal Bull Gerard is indicated as *institutor ac praepositus*, founder and superior of the hospital. The purpose of its foundation is well described: it is a House of God, *Dei domum*, established for the needs of pilgrims and the poor, where various services are offered: hospitality, care, food, protection.

The Bull also lists a series of buildings in the western world, considered part of the hospital in Jerusalem. They too are qualified as hospitals or hospices and correspond to the main places of gathering and boarding of pilgrims of the Holy Land: Saint Gilles du Gard, Asti, Pisa, Bari, Otranto, Taranto and Messina. The mere existence of this list shows that the institution founded by Gerard not only focuses on the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem, but already has ramifications throughout Christianity.

The epitaph on Gerard's tomb in Jerusalem, preserved in the Cambridge University Library, reads: "Here lies Gerard, the humblest man in the East / Servant of the poor and friend of strangers / Common in appearance, yet shining in him was a noble soul / In his house everything shows his virtue: / Careful of everything, he did everything at the right time." With his extraordinary ability and faith, the first Grand Master was able to host and care for the sick and destitute in the Holy Land, whoever they were and wherever they came from.





On 3 September 2020, exactly 900 years after his death, we, the members of the Order of Malta, who now number over 13,000 worldwide, celebrated his memory with an important commemoration ceremony, in Scala, his birthplace.

The celebrations began with a solemn Mass attended by the Order of Malta's delegation, which I had the honour to lead in my role as Lieutenant ad interim, with members of the Sovereign Council, the Procurators of the three Italian Grand Priorities, the President of the Italian Association and 100 knights, dames, chaplains and volunteers. Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and in accordance with the restrictions in place the participation of the Order's members was drastically reduced, compared

with the initial planned programme. The Italian Minister for Health, Roberto Speranza and the mayor of Scala, Luigi Mansi, were present at the Mass with us. In my address, I recalled how "the members and volunteers of the Order of Malta throughout the world are proud of their history and traditions which they translate daily into an obligation to alleviate human suffering", reminding that the membership "is a privilege that we must continue to deserve through our commitment to the tradition and example left us by our founder, Blessed Gerard".

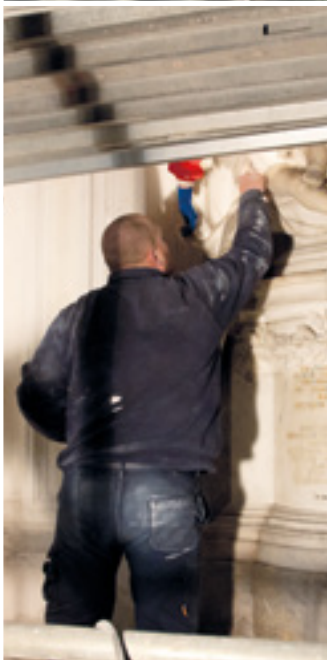
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**Fra' Gerard's example,  
based on the founding  
motto *Tuitio Fidei et  
Obsequium Pauperum*,  
has animated the Order  
of Malta's 900-year history**

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Around the world, on the same day, Masses were celebrated in Order churches and chapels and hospitals to remember our founder on this deeply significant anniversary.

# THE RESTORATION OF SANTA MARIA IN AVENTINO



The church of **Santa Maria in Aventino**, the masterpiece of Giovanni Battista Piranesi, has been returned to its ancient splendour thanks to a major restoration project, completed in 2019 after four years of intensive work. The renovation involved both the exterior and the interior of the church, with particular attention given to the altar: 900 square metres of scaffolding 12 metres high had to be erected, in order to restore it to its original beauty.

"There were three guidelines for the restoration: non-invasive interventions, reversible ones, and use of traditional materials," explains Giorgio Ferreri, the architect in charge of the project. "The restoration has made it possible to rediscover the original colours, shadows and depths. When the patina that covered all the surfaces was removed, we found the original colours underneath, so we integrated them and restored them - as if they were pictorial surfaces in a painting - and consolidated the stuccoes. This brought back the magnificent transparent effect, both inside and out. The extraordinary result is that we are now able to see his drawings three-dimensionally."

In several places the details of some of the stuccoes were missing; sometimes it was possible to recover them, because they were found located above the ledge of the cornice. Those missing were reintegrated, with special attention given to the identification of the restored section, thus allowing an expert eye to identify the new surfaces from the originals.

Now, after this expert restoration, the church can again be admired as Piranesi designed it, with its profusion of decorations and symbols - Egyptian, Etruscan, Roman and of the Order of Malta – all of which the artist modelled in great detail in the stucco.





The year 2020 marked the 300th anniversary of the birth of the famous Venetian artist **Giovanni Battista Piranesi** (1720-1778). The Piazza dei Cavalieri di Malta and the Church of Santa Maria in Aventino, both on the Aventine Hill in Rome, are the only architectural works by Piranesi. Considered by many to be among the best engravers of all time as well as a celebrated archeologist, Piranesi was able finally to give expression to his classical knowledge and his artistry through the beautiful stuccoes of the church, with their many allusions to Baroque and Neoclassical art. It was the cardinal and nephew of Pope Clement XIII, Giovanni Battista Rezzonico, Grand Prior of Rome of the Order of Malta, who in 1764 requested of Piranesi a refurbishment of the church. In his work, he wanted to highlight some of the fundamental aspects and characteristics of the Order of Malta: therefore Santa Maria in Aventino presents an original and unique iconographic rhetoric that is exceptional in the history of architecture.

## Section 5

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# THE ORDER OF MALTA'S ACTIVITIES AROUND THE WORLD

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The Order of Malta's long-standing mission to help those in need continues today on all six continents. Every day, thousands of members and volunteers, together with medical professionals, care for the sick, the elderly, the disabled, the lonely, the homeless, the discriminated against, refugees, victims of war or of natural disasters. New programmes, and therefore new challenges, are added to the projects that permanently provide care, food and assistance. New countries are joining the long list of those in which the Order of Malta is permanently involved. It is a mission that has been carried out for over 900 years, with the same dedication.



# AFRICA

*The Order of Malta has a widespread and long-standing presence in Africa, working in the medical, health and social care fields, and supporting those displaced by violence in their countries. The Covid-19 pandemic and the difficulties in procuring vaccines risks worsening the situation on a continent which has suffered many times under threats of disease, natural disasters and wars.*



## Benin

Since 1974 Ordre de Malte France has been running the general Hospital of St John of Malta in Djougou, which is the only health centre of the region with an operating unit. It has 125 beds and carries out an annual average of 19,000 medical examinations. The Order also supports 13 health centres situated in the poorest areas of the country, for the most part providing mother-and-child care and malnutrition programmes.

## Burkina Faso

Ordre de Malte France has managed the St. John of Malta health centre in Ouagadougou since 2006. It began by treating neglected tropical diseases and, because of the enlargement of the centre, which remains open 24/7, it can now offer more than 28,000 consultations per year, from general medicine to dental care and ophthalmology. The new eyewear manufacturing centre assembles eyeglasses with recycled frames and lenses from France. The Order supports 12 health centres across the country, providing free medicines and medical equipment,

as well as five ambulance posts located in different parts of the country, in cooperation with the Fire Brigade and the University Hospital. The largest, in Bobo Dioulasso, has 50 paramedics.

## Burundi

In the provinces of Rutana, Makamba, and Muyinga, Malteser International supports returnees and residents who had experienced violence, providing them with psychological and psychiatric care. In the provinces of Bubanza and Rumonge, where Congolese refugees are concentrated, Malteser International seeks to curb cholera by supplying the population with clean water and improving medical care through prevention campaigns. To cope with the growing number of street children, a consequence of the 2005 crisis, Malteser International has sponsored two homes of the Stamm Foundation, in Bujumbura and in Ngozi, where they receive protection, education and care.

## Cameroon

Ordre de Malte France has a range of activities

in Cameroon. Since 1994 it has been running the St. John of Malta hospital in Njombé, which is specialised in treating tropical diseases and offers multi-care services: a maternity unit, gynaecology, neonatology and paediatrics, general medicine, and a 24/7 emergency service. The hospital also runs a training centre for first aiders. Ordre de Malte France manages a dispensary and supports 10 health centres located in different areas of the country. The Rohan Chabot Centre in Mokolo, which has been run by the Order since 1970, was initially established as a Hansen's disease centre. It now also provides general medical, orthopaedic, antenatal, maternal and child care consultations. Ordre de Malte France also supports the French-African Group of Paediatric Oncologists together with the Cameroonian Chantal Biya Foundation, for the treatment of young cancer patients.

## Cape Verde

In 2020 funds were collected through the Order of Malta's Embassy to support vulnerable groups with essential food and hygiene items, in partnership with Caritas and local NGOs.



### Central African Republic

Ordre de Malte France supports 12 health clinics, sending medicines and contributing financially to the management of the Functional Rehabilitation Centre in Bangui. The Order also supports paediatric reconstructive surgery missions with a volunteer surgical team.

### Chad

In the capital N'Djamena, Ordre de Malte France manages two health centres with a very well-equipped testing laboratory, and well-established outreach programmes in the surrounding area. Am'Toukoui centre, built in 1993, has an ophthalmic department; the Walia centre, run by the Order since 2005, offers mother-and-child care.

### Comoros, Union of

The action that led Ordre de Malte France to support four centres in the Union of Comoros, covering operating costs, medicines and medical equipment, began in 1978. These centres - managed by Caritas Comoros - are situated in Great Comoros (one in Moroni and one mo-

bile structure in M'Beni), in Mohéli (Fomboni) and in Anjouan (Mutsumadu). Since 2017 the Order has supported a dispensary with a specialised maternity centre in Mrémani.

### Democratic Republic of Congo

Ordre de Malte France helps two reception centres in Bukavu, the Ek'Abana and the Nyota homes. These centres provide help and care for hundreds of children in extremely difficult environments, by offering them training and supporting them in their family reintegration efforts.

Since 1996, Malteser International has been working to improve hygiene and infection prevention, carrying out a variety of projects in water and sanitation, health, and food security. The local population includes Congolese citizens and South Sudanese refugees. Control measures were set up in response to the Ebola outbreak.

Since 2002, Order of Malta Belgium International Aid, has been providing support to the King Baudouin I Hospital Centre of Kinshasa, overseeing hospital management and financing renovation and re-equipment works. In 2019, two operating rooms and the intensive

care unit were rehabilitated, including one for caesarean sections. In 2020, thanks to funds granted by the Global Fund for Forgotten People, the construction of a department for the prevention of nosocomial diseases could be constructed.

Still underway in South Kivu, on Idjwi Island, are the two agropastoral projects launched in 2014 and 2016, in partnership with Caritas International (Belgium) and Caritas Development (DRC), with the aim of supporting households by improving their traditional family farming practices.

In 2019 Order of Malta Belgium International Aid, with the financial support of the King Baudouin Foundation, led to Monvu general reference hospital's acquisition of an automatic haematology analysis machine; it also financed the purchase of new mattresses and bedsheets in Kihumba hospital.

As well, a 12-ton container of equipment for a technical school in Mwene Ditu (Lomami province, formerly Kasai) was delivered.

The Embassy has been providing administrative and customs assistance for the importation of medical and humanitarian equipment needed for a range of health, educational, agricultural and social projects.

## Republic of Congo

In Brazzaville, Ordre de Malte France manages the dispensary of Saint Kisito, built in 2013 and specialised in prenatal consultations and maternal and child protection. Since 2016, it has been following a national performance-based funding programme aimed at continuously improving the quality of care and equipment. In 2020 over 10,000 medical consultations and treatments were carried out.

Ordre de Malte France helps three other health centres: Poto Poto in Brazzaville, Shalom Sembé in Ouessou and the Pastorale of Enyellé, providing medicines and medical supplies.

In February 2020, in a three-year partnership with the French Development Agency, Ordre de Malte France launched another project with the aim of providing health care to indigenous populations, to strengthen their capacity to develop income-generating activities and to help them strengthen their rights.

6,000 therapeutic treatments, 5,000 preventive actions and 830 vaccinations were performed by the Order's team, which also diagnosed over 300 new cases of Hansen's disease, believed to be non-existent in the country.

## Egypt

The Order's Embassy supports the Abu Zaabal Leprosarium near Cairo, and two centres for diagnosis and treatment of diabetes: the Blessed Gerard dispensary, in Nazlet Ghattas (Minya) inaugurated in 2016 and the Blessed Gerard clinic in Shoubra (Cairo) inaugurated in 2017.

## Ethiopia

The Embassy has been active in the country since 1970. In recent years, the Order has focused on ongoing initiatives for mothers and children. For example, by supporting a centre for the vocational training of disadvantaged women to start work and helping a primary school which is situated next to the Ethiopian capital's gigantic rubbish dump. It also supports, in a variety of ways, the small maternity

The Embassy of the Order of Malta in **Ethiopia** has supported the Catholic University of Ethiopia (now ECHLI-L Ethiopian Catholic Higher Learning Institute - La Salle) since its foundation, for which the then Apostolic Nuncio, now Cardinal Silvano M. Tomasi, in the early 2000s set the grounds.

The University, which is now a reality, is organised in three departments: medical sciences, engineering, and humanities and social sciences, and benefits from the academic participation of the University of Padua. More than 500 students are enrolled for the 2020-2021 academic year, and the number is increasing rapidly. The Embassy is now working with the various institutions involved to achieve a joint degree between the Catholic University of Ethiopia and the University of Padua (double value of the academic qualification, both in Ethiopia and in Italy and therefore in Europe). Work is also under way to establish the headquarters of the IHEA Foundation, (Italian Higher Education with Africa), at the ECHLI-L Campus in Addis Ababa, with the participation of the Universities of Bologna, Florence, Padua, La Sapienza of Rome, the Polytechnic of Milan and the Federico II of Naples.

and children's clinic, operational since 2018 within the campus of the Catholic University of Ethiopia in Addis Ababa. In the ferocious conflict in Tigray in November 2020, which caused a serious humanitarian crisis with two million displaced people and a real risk of famine, the Order worked through religious congregations in the area to bring aid (food and medicines) to the affected populations.

## Gabon

The presence of the Order in Gabon dates back more than 60 years. Ordre de Malte France helps three health centres: the Saint Joseph de Lalala in Libreville, the White Cross dispensary at Port Gentil and the Makokou health centre, in northeast Gabon. Since 2013 Ordre de Malte France has been supplying health posts in indigenous villages with medical drugs.

The Order also supports the Hansen's disease village of Ebeigne and ensures that families receive food and are integrated into the life of the town and the parish.

## Guinea-Bissau

For a long time, the Order has been collaborating with some local NGOs and religious authorities, in the fields of medical assistance,

humanitarian aid and education.

The Order contributes to the financial and logistical support of the Cumura hospital, which is managed by the Catholic Church.

## Guinea-Conakry

Ordre de Malte France runs a health centre and supports 14 dispensaries, by providing vaccinations, primary curative consultations, prenatal consultations, family planning and assisted deliveries.

In particular, the Docteur Maladho Bah health centre in Pita is a logistical base for the implementation of national programmes to fight against Hansen's disease, tuberculosis, Buruli ulcer and Ebola fever, in Middle Guinea.

## Ivory Coast (Republic of)

The Saint Jean Baptiste Hospital of Bodo was inaugurated in 2015. Since then the hospital has gradually implemented medical and surgical services, a mother-and-child department, vaccinations, radiology and medical emergency units. It has a capacity of 80 beds and 146 medical staff. In 2019, 24,968 consultations, 523 surgeries and 730 births were recorded.

In addition, Ordre de Malte France supports 17 dispensaries, distributed throughout the

country, with donations of medical drugs and equipment or through financial grants.

## Kenya

Malteser International has been working in Kenya since 2001. A focus of its work is the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS among disadvantaged groups in the slums of Nairobi, and the Maasai people. The Order is working to improve Kenya's capacities for specialised medical professions, to ensure basic technologies in health care facilities and to provide better access to emergency obstetric and neonatal care for refugees and host communities in Kakuma and Kalobeyei. Since the terrible drought of 2011, Malteser International has been engaged in preparing and protecting the semi-nomadic population of the country's north from the dry periods which increasingly strike them, providing new irrigation systems, training programmes to improve the quality of agriculture and livestock breeding, as well as a connection to local markets. After months of drought, in 2019, and the un-

sual heavy rainfall and flash-flooding which created breeding conditions for the desert locusts, Malteser International has geared up its humanitarian response to reach vulnerable families in Marsabit with livestock feed and cash assistance, in coordination with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Malteser International and the Order's Embassy, who jointly financed the construction of the maternity station at the Kakuma Mission Hospital, under the Dioceses of Lodwar. It was completed in February 2021 and built using zero-carbon material from Uganda.

During the pandemic emergency period, personal protective equipment, blankets and food were donated by the Embassy to different organisations - refugee camps and hospitals. The Nazareth Joy Village which takes care of 58 vulnerable and orphaned children was equipped with two large washing machines.

## Liberia

The Order of Malta Embassy has been collaborating with DAHW/GLRA (German Lep-

rosy and TB Relief Association) in Liberia to support the Ganta Rehab Centre for Hansen's disease patients, where a new waste management system has been recently implemented. Massatine village is another humanitarian focus for the Embassy.

## Madagascar

Ordre de Malte France is present in two of the six provinces of the country: in Antananarivo, where it manages the Sainte Fleur Maternity Hospital, and in Fianarantsoa, where it provides financial support to the Hansen's disease hospital in Marana, for care and reintegration after recovery.

In 2020 a new neonatology wing was built at the Sainte Fleur Pavilion, doubling the capacity for welcoming premature babies. The Sainte Fleur Pavilion now has 16 incubators and eight cradles. Almost 2,700 deliveries were performed, together with 153 surgical operations (not counting caesareans), 24,267 vaccinations, 20,895 obstetric consultations and 1,521 paediatric consultations.



The two projects were set up in 2015 and 2016 respectively for prenatal consultations in nine dispensaries in disadvantaged districts of the capital. Their focus was to detect high-risk pregnancies and accommodate difficult deliveries in the maternity ward, and offer specialist consultations to detect and treat obstetric fistulas (about fifty patients per year).

The Order's Embassy was also able to implement a Mobile Maternal Healthcare service through an agreement with 11 health centres. An ophthalmological mission was carried out in March 2020: patients were visited and treated in the 11 health centres supported by the Order.

### Mali

Ordre de Malte France supports the Bamako Ambulance and First Aid Training Centre, created in 2006, which offers training sessions

for volunteers and companies (first aid and monitoring) as well as medical transports.

Ordre de Malte France supports 12 dispensaries and one assistance centre for mentally challenged children. They are spread over the sub-Saharan part of Mali and are managed by religious congregations.

In February 2021, the Order of Malta Embassy donated medicines to the ambulances and First Aid Training Centre.

The Dermatology Hospital in Bamako has become one of the Covid-19 reference centres in the country. Covid-19 patients are transported by volunteers in one of the hospital's ambulances. A sanitising service is also provided.

### Mauritania

The presence of the Order of Malta is currently focused on reconstructive surgery missions for

the benefit of patients with sequelae of Hansen's disease, in partnership with the Mauritanian Ministry of Health, the Mauritanian association of promotion of people with disabilities due to leprosy and the Raoul Follereau Foundation.

### Mauritius

The presence of the Order on the island dates back to 1978. Since 2013, Ordre de Malte France has been contributing to the development of the Mauritius association of Friends of the Sovereign Order of Malta by training first-aid workers (currently there are 80). It provided an ambulance in early 2019, for street assistance for the homeless and the marginalised.

During 2020 meals and food parcels were distributed to the homeless, and in late July 2020 an intervention to help clean up oil pollution



following the tragedy of the Wakashio, a Japanese ship stranded on the southern side of Mauritius, was launched.

## Morocco

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The Order of Malta's humanitarian action in Morocco began in 1967 with financial aid for two Hansen's disease pavilions in the Ain Chock hospital.

Ordre de Malte France has continued its mission during these years with the shipment of diabetes medical supplies and more recently has focused on fighting preventable blindness and the regular shipment of cataract kits, signing specific agreements with the Moroccan Ministry of Health.

The Order of Malta's Embassy provides for the distribution of specific medicines and medical equipment for children with oncological disorders. It monitors and supports clinics with financial and material donations. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the Embassy distributed food aid in rural areas on several occasions and has helped sub-Saharan mothers with donations of equipment for their newborns.

## Mozambique

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Ordre de Malte France has participated in the national Hansen's disease control programme since 1969, by supporting the rehabilitation and reintegration of patients, the distribution of medicines and by participation in care.

In March 2015, the signing of a partnership agreement with NLR (Netherlands Leprosy Relief) and the ILEP (International Federation of Anti-Leprosy Associations) coordinator on site, provided training for nurses responsible for screening. Since 2016, the Order of Malta has continued its control actions in coordination with the national programme and the World Health Organization, along two axes: expertise mission and analysis of the situation in the provinces of Nampula and Niassa, and reconstructive surgery mission in Nampula.

## Namibia

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The management of the kindergarten, the soup kitchen, the sewing centre and the first aid clinic, in Rundu Province - Kavanango Region - is the main project of the Embassy of the Order in the country.

The kindergarten, built in 2010 by the Embassy, provides lodging for 120 orphans (aged one to six years), who had been used to sleeping in the streets and suffering abuses. It is equipped with solar panels on the roof, to provide warm water for the bathrooms and laundry. The soup kitchen provides about 600 daily meals to the children from the nursery school, and on Sundays, also to youngsters and the local elderly of the slum community of Kehemu.

Since 2007, the sewing centre has been teaching women, mainly widows and HIV patients, how to sew and make clothes. The women who attend the centre are also assisted with a nutrition programme that includes a supplement to the local diet with proteins and fruit.

In 2018 the Order inaugurated the First Aid Centre next to the Kehemu hospital. The centre is managed and staffed by the local Benedictine Sisters and the Order provided all the necessary medical equipment and furnishings.

The Embassy purchased water tanks and other equipment to cope with the severe droughts that hit the country in 2019 and in 2020.

## Nigeria

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In Maiduguri, in 2017 Malteser International's team launched a project for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) in cooperation with the local partner CIDAR (Centre for Integrated Development and Research). In 2019 Malteser International opened a second office in the town of Pulka, to improve the hygiene situation of thousands of displaced persons, by reducing the risk of waterborne diseases.

In 2019 the Order of Malta opened the Bakhita Villa Centre, in Lagos, which offers protection

and assistance to women victims of human trafficking. The current collaboration process also provides for the identification of victims who wish to return from Italy.

## São Tomé e Príncipe

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The Embassy of the Order continues its collaboration with the Portuguese NGO 'Ami - International Medical Assistance' in the S. João dos Angolares Hospital and with the Franciscan nuns in the town of Neves.

Over the years, the hospital has received supplies and equipment, as well as clothing and computers. The ambulance given by the Embassy to S. João dos Angolares Hospital is under the protection of AMI.

## Senegal

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Ordre de Malte France supports 13 health centres across the country and runs the Centre Hospitalier de l'Ordre de Malte (CHOM) in Dakar, which carries out two main activities: Hansen's disease care and orthopaedic surgery. In 2019, there were 22,549 consultations, 969 hospitalisations and 698 surgical interventions. 2020 ended with the inauguration of the Jean Alfred Diallo front desk, an extension of the Centre, which enlarges the Centre's reception capacity.

The Senegalese Association manages the socio-medical centre on the island of Gorée; it supports and makes donations to a centre of the Sisters of Charity for the socio-professional and family reintegration of underprivileged girls, and to the Centre de Santé Dominique in Pikine, as well as to the Maison d'Arrêt des Femmes de Liberté VI and to « L'Ecole à l'Hôpital » for children hospitalised in the Order of Malta Hospital (CHOM) in Dakar.

The Embassy supports the 'Casamasanté Centre', near Cap Skirring, which cares for the children of workers. It also cooperates, together with Ordre de Malte France, with SAMU Social Sénégal, which focuses on Hansen's disease detection and orthopaedic and ophthalmological care for street children.

## Seychelles

Since 1992 the Embassy has provided medical equipment, such as defibrillators, special microscopes, laboratory equipment, beds, wheelchairs, stretchers, school items, clothing and medical books which were distributed amongst different hospitals.

In February 2021, the Embassy managed to obtain 5,000 disposable syringes from the MIOT (Madras Institute of Orthopaedics and Traumatology) hospital in Chennai (India), which were then donated to the Seychelles hospital, to support the national campaign to contain the Covid-19 epidemic.

## South Africa

The Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard has been operative in South Africa since 1992, with more than 1,500 active members and over 700 financial supporters.

Through the Blessed Gérard Care Centre in Mandeni, an HIV/AIDS treatment programme includes voluntary counselling and HIV-testing, HAART (Highly Active Anti-Retroviral Therapy), with free comprehensive medical care and regular home visits to patients on antiretroviral treatment to ensure adherence and prevent treatment failure. As of June 2021, more than 700 patients are on ongoing life-long treatments.

The Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard provides hospice and palliative care through its 40-bed inpatient unit as well as home-based care for families. In 2020 the home nursing teams carried out 448 home visits; 63 patients were transported by ambulance; 996 patients were looked after at home; 32 new home care patients were enrolled.

The Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard provides 'edu-care' and early childhood development services for about 80 underprivileged children, and runs a children's home, where more than 50 orphans and vulnerable children from the wider Mandeni area live.

Blessed Gérard's Bursary Fund is a project which enables needy young people to attain a



proper education: 267 bursaries were given in 2020 to university and school students.

The malnutrition clinic staff treat and feed malnourished infants and teach their parents/carer givers about correct baby care and nutrition to avoid permanent brain damage. In 2020, 40 children were treated, and 50,462 specialised meals were provided.

## South Sudan

Malteser International has been working in what is now South Sudan since 1996, especially in the medical field, initially focusing on treating tuberculosis and sleeping sickness. In recent years this focus has been expanded to the fields of WASH (water, sanitation and

hygiene) especially in the provinces of Juba, Rumbek, Wau and Yei, and of food security.

Malteser International is helping 850 particularly needy families in five villages near the city of Wau, to make long-term improvements to the quality and security of their food. It also supplies water and hygiene items to about 18,000 people and is rehabilitating irrigation systems and access roads, with the cooperation of local families who received farming land from the diocese of Wau.

Water kiosks, which are now managed by the community, were installed to supply 15,000 people with affordable and safe drinking water. 20 blocks of public sanitation facilities were erected in public places, and solar lighting systems were installed in public sanitation fa-

cilities, to ensure safety for girls and women. Thousands of people are trained as multipliers on correct hygiene behaviour. In Maridi, Mambe and Ngamunde, Malteser International is also involved with cultivation of school gardens and vegetable gardens, the installation of washing platforms, and health and hygiene measures, including the distribution of soap. The project aims to improve the income sources and food available for particularly vulnerable households, with the supply of seeds, and the processing, storage and marketing of local products, through the development of agricultural cooperatives. Child friendly spaces for street children have been built in the area around Wau, to give them a safe and protected space where they can play and learn.

### Tanzania

Malteser International is working to help provide both Burundian refugees and local Tanzanians with medical care, and helps vulnerable pregnant women to gain access to high quality maternal and obstetrics care during pregnancy and childbirth in the maternity unit of the Mtendele camp.

### Togo

Ordre de Malte France manages a hospital in Elavagnon and supports seven dispensaries, which are distributed around the country. The Elavagnon hospital offers general medicine and paediatrics and has a surgery department and a maternity ward. In 2019, 6,677 hospitalisations, 18,320 consultations, 161 births, 511 surgical operations and 25 orthopaedic operations were performed in the hospital. The centre for nutrition and mother-and-child protection provides screening for infantile orthopaedic malformations (which can benefit from surgical treatment in the hospital) and ensures good nutrition for the children. It has recently developed a nutritional garden. Hospital gardens are intended to modify or

supplement nutritional customs and to adapt the diet to the needs of the children, by teaching their mothers how to grow different varieties of vegetables and diversify their nutrition.

### Uganda

Malteser International began to work in Uganda with vaccination projects in 1996, and is now carrying out many projects in the fields of health, WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) and environmental sustainability. The organisation is running a programme to establish a national emergency medical care system, together with the Ministry of Health and partners. This includes the training of emergency care technicians, ambulance providers and staff, a call and dispatch

centre, and improved and faster care for patients in the emergency rooms of hospitals. It is also carrying out a project to train physiotherapists.

Malteser International provides emergency relief for refugees, with clean water supply, and assists in the integration of refugees by facilitating vocational training and improvement of their livelihood options.

As well, the organisation is working to improve long-term economic development in refugee reception areas, by producing high-quality building panels from rice straw, a waste product which is a good alternative to the earthen bricks which are then used to construct sustainable buildings. This creates an alternative source of income for farmers, refugees, and members of the local host communities.



# THE AMERICAS

*The Order of Malta has an active presence in almost all the countries in North- Central- and South America, carrying out a wide range of humanitarian activities. Facilities are in place, providing care and treatment in hospitals, homes for the elderly, programmes for people with disabilities, food distribution centres for the homeless and for street children.*



## Argentina

The precarious social situation in Argentina (52% poverty rate) has worsened drastically in the last year due to the lack of work and the effects of the Covid 19 pandemic, affecting millions of families.

Faced with this reality, the Argentine Association implemented the “La Orden Quiere Ser Pan” Campaign, the largest and most far-reaching work in its history, which distributes food every week in deprived areas. One year after its start, more than 250,000 kg of dry food, fruit and vegetables have been distributed to 15 parishes for cooking in their dining halls, where 6,000 people are assisted daily in the Federal Capital and the Province of Buenos Aires. To sustain this programme many important donations were received.

During the winter months, through the campaigns “La Orden te Abriga” and “La Orden te Arropa”, the distribution of fleece blankets and warm clothes to people in vulnerable situations and to numerous welfare institutions throughout the country continued. Since its start in 2015 and to date, 15,500 blankets

and tons of warm clothes have been delivered throughout the country.

Also this year, at the request of the Cardinal Primate of Argentina, H.E.R. Mario A. Poli, the Argentinean Association built a simple parish church in the “Ciudad Oculta” neighbourhood, the most dangerous in the capital.

All other face-to-face activities have been temporarily interrupted due to the restrictions decreed by governmental resolution because of the pandemic.

## Bahamas

The Order’s Embassy gives financial support to the local Catholic church, and continues operating the Bahamas Feeding Network, founded in 2013, which provides weekly meals to the poor and unemployed.

## Bolivia

The activity of the Bolivian Association, in strong synergy with the Order’s Embassy, supports a number of health centres in the three main cities: El Alto, La Paz and Santa Cruz.

The Association offers social and spiritual support to those in need and provides free-of-charge medical care and medicines to low-income patients with complex diseases.

## Brazil

There are three Order Associations in this large country.

The São Paulo Association operates through the Centro Assistencial Cruz de Malta and thanks to the assistance of its 400 volunteers, is able to provide medical care to nearly 60,000 people a year.

The Association also organises educational projects and supports a nursery for 220 children and a youth centre for 150 teenagers.

In the State of Paraná it supports a home for 65 elderly, a nursery for 70 children aged two to seven and a school for professional training for 150 pupils.

In the State of Amapá, in the city of Macapá, the Association ran a boat, the ‘St. John the Baptist’, which provides medical care to the isolated populations of the area along the Amazon river. Since the death of Rev. Raul Matte, the



doctor who initiated this project, the boat has been donated to the Camillians of Macapà, who have promised to continue the assistance started 60 years ago, keeping the name 'St. John the Baptist' and the symbols of the Order of Malta. In Curitiba it manages a nursery, a school for disabled children, a senior centre and a Reintegration Centre for drug addicts.

The Association of Rio de Janeiro runs the health centre of 'San João Bautista', where basic medicine, paediatrics, geriatrics, vaccinations and other medical consultations are provided free of charge.

The Association of Brasília runs 10 crèches in the Federal District of Brasília and a social centre for children, adolescents and the elderly in Minas Gerais. In this centre, approximately 100 students per day attend basic school courses and receive computer and professional training. On the occasion of World Hansen's Disease Day, January 29, 2021, the International Campaign of the Order of Malta against Leprosy (CIOMAL), set up a new partnership with the Alliance Against Leprosy Association. This cooperation will make it possible to intervene more directly in the state of Mato Grosso, where each year more than 4,000 new cases of Hansen's disease are detected.

## Canada

Many members of the Canadian Association are active in charitable activities for people with disabilities, or compromised mental health and drug addiction; they also help prisoners and the homeless in Toronto, Ottawa, Montréal and Québec City. They support the 'Open Door Clinic' in Vancouver ensuring the costs of eye care and glasses for people in need are covered.

In Montreal, members and volunteers work in six homes for the elderly. All year, they assist pilgrims making their way to the Oratory of St. Joseph and to the Sanctuary of Notre-Dame-du-Cap.

The Association is also involved with international activities, including support for Maltaser International Americas and the Order's International Association of Bioethics (IACB). In 2019 the 9th IACB International Colloquium was held in Québec City with the theme: 'Decision making and consent in health care involving persons with vulnerability.'

## Chile

In Chile the national Association and the Fundación Auxilio Maltés provide health assistance, financial support and medical

equipment to the major hospitals in Santiago: San José Hospital, Dr. Exequiel González Cortés, Roberto Del Río, and Josefina Martínez. Since 1996, the Fundación Auxilio Maltés has focused on the rehabilitation of chronic respiratory patients with limited resources, especially oxygen-dependent children, most of whom have been treated successfully. Now the programme also involves elderly patients. In three regions (Loncoche, Liquiñe and La Serena), the Fundación has set up teams of volunteers who visit and care for sick and abandoned people, assist terminal patients, offer paramedical care, distribute clothes, medicines, supplies and medical equipment, and organise religious services and first-aid courses.

The Order also runs a welcome centre for immigrants in a building it owns in Yungay, a neighbourhood of Santiago.

As the Covid-19 situation deteriorated, the Fundación Auxilio Maltés delivered all the respiratory devices it had in stock to the 'Our Lady of Philermos Rehabilitation Centre' (built in 2011 by the Fundación in the San José Hospital for patients with bronchopulmonary diseases), so that a maximum of patients could stay at home and avoid contagion.



The Chilean Association focused on providing food to those most in need and targeted the slum Nosedal III, to develop a basic food distribution programme in the Liquiñe rural district. In the territory of Santiago – in Chépica, Concepción, Loncoche, Villarrica and Liquiñe, medical missions in remote areas - delivery of basic items to vulnerable people and relief to the victims of natural disasters are now carried out.

## Colombia

Since 1957 the Order's Colombian Association has run a range of projects in the fields of health care and social assistance and gives food support and aid in time of natural disasters, such as after Hurricane Iota in mid-November 2020, when immediate relief response was delivered to the affected populations in the northern island of San Andrés. In recent years the Association has cooperated with major international donors to import and distribute basic items, including medical equipment and medicines, food and nutrition-

al strengthening products, such as Manna-pack and fortified rice, reaching out to tens of thousands of vulnerable people, including Venezuelan refugees. Help was also given to more than 70 institutions.

In 2020 the Order provided the assembly and maintenance of four drinking water processing plants and distributed 1,000 water purification tablets. Thanks to Food for the Poor 195,000 units of oral rehydration solution were distributed to areas of the country suffering from malnutrition and lack of drinking water.

The inhabitants of Barranquilla, Cartagena and Rioacha in northern Colombia received thousands of diapers for children and elderly people, as well as 15,000 pairs of sandals and 520 wheelchairs, all of which were donated and delivered over the last two years.

'Nuestro hermano tiene hambre' ('Our fellow man is hungry') is a special programme launched to help those affected by the economic crisis caused by the pandemic. It offers a weekly distribution of food and essential goods in some areas of Bogotá and in the city

of Cucuta, as well as to migrants coming from Venezuela. About 54,810 food parcels and hygiene kits have been distributed.

The programme 'Mercado de Francisco' is providing food to marginalised communities.

The Lisboa Community Centre, in the Suba District, is focused on the disabled, the elderly and migrants.

The Nuestra Señora de Filermo Community Centre (district of Bogotá) offers free of charge medical and psychological therapy, social work, workshops, and leisure time activities. An average of 450 people participate each month.

With the DUNI (means 'thank you' in Arhuaco language) project in cooperation with the Colombian Association, the Cuban Association completed the construction of a tubing system to provide drinking water to the villages of the native Kogi and Arhuaca communities. Malteser International has been active in northern Colombia since 2014, and is now working in the fields of health, food security and climate change adaptation, mainly in the poor rural

areas of the departments of La Guajira, César and Magdalena, and with vulnerable groups. It is also focusing on responding to the continuous flow of refugees from Venezuela, providing them with medical assistance.

### Costa Rica

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Since 2016, the Costa Rican Association has been collaborating with the Centro Penal Juvenil Zurquí contributing, through its volunteers, in the rehabilitation of young prisoners. The Order's Embassy supports the 'Meriendas Milagrosas' project, carried out by the parish of Nuestra Señora de la Medalla Milagrosa, in Barrio Cuba, which promotes activities for local children.

In 2020 a donation to the Foundation for the Development of the National Children's Hospital meant that a 26-channel electro myograph could be purchased.

### Cuba

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In Cuba, the Order of Malta Cuban Association is supporting various projects in 68 parishes

and four dispensaries of the Siervas de Maria, including a centre for children with Down syndrome, a home for retired priests in Havana, and the Seminario Mayor de San Carlos y San Ambrosio in Camagüey.

A project for the development of a farm producing mainly wheat, beans, eggs, chicken and pork, to ensure the supply of food to the Cuban soup kitchens, is carried out in cooperation with the Benedictine Fathers.

In 2019 more than 500,000 meals were distributed to 5,000 elderly people in need in 62 parishes.

The Association also provides medical assistance to poor and displaced persons cared for by the nuns of the Siervas Maria Order, in the provinces of Havana, Matanzas, Camagüey and Holguín.

After the F3-force tornado in January 2019 in Havana, the Association donated funds to help the victims.

In 2020, due to the Covid-19 restrictions, humanitarian efforts concentrated on the import of food from U.S. charities and the development of some forms of cooperation in the context of Hansen's disease.

The Order's Cuban Association, with its members spread throughout Cuba, the United States and Puerto Rico, operates and funds various humanitarian programmes in Cuba, Miami and several Latin American countries.

### Dominican Republic

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The activity of the Order's Dominican Association is focused on the distribution of medicine and medical equipment throughout the country, thanks to the intervention of the Order's Embassy, which facilitates administrative operations. It manages three primary care clinics in Herrera, Monte Plata and Haina, providing a wide range of care: general medicine, gynaecology and paediatric services, dental care, lab testing, vaccinations, nutritional evaluation, psychology, oncology and endocrinology consultations, HIV prevention and counselling and training for health care professionals. During the pandemic health care services were expanded, including offering telephone consultations.

In 2020, the three clinics registered almost 18,300 consultations, and over 24,300 health services were provided.

The Order of Malta embarked upon a Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) improvement project in all three clinics, with financial and technical assistance from Americares.

Donations of medicine and medical equipment from international donors (Food for the Poor and Americares) are continually distributed to the network of over 300 health and medical facilities across the country.

During the coronavirus pandemic, the Association expanded its activities to provide extra financial and in-kind support to other institutions and individuals confronting Covid-19: almost 9,000 boxes of non-perishable food, providing sustenance to a family of four for a week, and 22 containers of humanitarian aid including medicine and medical equipment were distributed.

The Cuban Association carries out regular medical missions to the Dominican Republic, providing medicines and medical services and



supplies to the local indigent population with the help of the ILAC Centre (Institute of Latin American Concern)/ Manuel José Centurion Hospital in Licey al Medio (Valle del Cibao).

### Ecuador

The Order's Embassy raised funds which were donated to the 'Misión Don Bosco', to help 2,500 families with food supply.

Preliminary assessment was carried out by the Embassy for a collaboration programme with artisanal fishermen to create hatcheries for the restocking of native fish in coastal areas and to give poorer communities access to fish proteins with a high Omega3 content.

### El Salvador

The Order of Malta has been present in the country since 1951. Over the years, eight clinics have been operating in Santa Tecla, Usulután, Sonsonate, Suchitoto, Rosario de Mora, Zacatecoluca, Chalchuapa and Coatepeque, offering free of charge primary healthcare,

general medicine consultations, nursing care and health education; some are also specialised in dental services, laboratory analysis, physiotherapy, pneumology and angiology. Each clinic registers on average more than 11,500 medical consultations per year.

In December 2019 the Order's Embassy was able to get 1,000 photovoltaic panels to supply the eight clinics with essential electricity.

The Embassy also donated 20 electrical medical beds and 10 intensive care beds to the hospice for the elderly.

The El Salvador Volunteer Organisation coordinates the volunteers, who visit patients in clinics to attend to their spiritual or medical needs. Volunteers are also actively engaged in fundraising, emergency response and youth services.

### Guatemala

With infrastructures and know-how distribution systems in place, the Guatemalan Association has been able to receive and distribute about 170 containers a year of humanitarian aid

through the country, to help thousands of the poor, the sick, and victims of natural disasters.

The Association continues to support the National Health Network with disposable medical supplies, hospital furniture and equipment, which are donated to national and first emergency hospitals, health centres, volunteers and municipal fire brigades.

After the eruption of the El Fuego volcano on 3 June 2018 the Association helped the local bishop to organise a shelter for families in the Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe parish, and sent their mobile clinic in Escuintla to give support, enabling 117 medical consultations to be performed in the days immediately after the disaster.

After hurricanes Eta and Iota in November 2020 the Order of Malta immediately prepared donations, food and humanitarian aid for the affected populations.

Thanks to a donation from the European Investment Bank, Malteser International was able to support the Guatemalan Association with a shelter rehabilitation project targeting 826 families (3,755 people) in the Quiche and





Alta Verapaz regions, replacing household items and livestock lost in the storm. In 2020 the President of the Republic of Guatemala, through the Embassy of the Order to Guatemala, formally invited the Order to join the Guatemalan 'Unit for the Control of Infectious Diseases' currently dedicated to discussions regarding the Covid-19 emergency.

### Guyana

The Order's Embassy supports some local institutions, including St Joseph Mercy Hospital, the Crisel Academy in Parfaite Harmonie which sponsors the education of needy students, and the paediatric clinic in Port Kaituma.

During the Covid-19 lockdown, the Embassy financially supported home visits to families unable to reach the hospital, as well as a vaccination campaign for children.

### Haiti

Project activities continue, despite challenges in the context of the pandemic (some projects

have been refocused on Covid-19 prevention) and the unstable security situation. Malteser International's project on food security continues in three regions of Haiti, Cité Soleil, Belle Anse and Nippes, all regularly affected by drought.

### Honduras

In 2019 the Honduran Association donated medical materials to local hospitals coping with the dengue emergency.

In the first month of the Covid-19 pandemic, when the procurement of medical protective devices was still difficult, the Embassy of the Republic of China - Taiwan donated 50,000 masks to the Association. They were distributed among three institutions: Villa de las Niñas college, Villa de los Niños college and Hospital de la Comunidad de Ojojona.

To overcome the emergency caused by Hurricane Eta in November 2020, the Honduran Association organised a distribution of clothing, blankets, bedspreads for emergencies, food and medicines, involving Americares and Food for the Poor, and other donors from Europe who sent several containers to help the affected

population. In San Pedro Sula 10,000 people were provided with drinking water thanks to the donation of water purification equipment.

### Mexico

The Mexican Association has been carrying out a wide range of humanitarian activities since 1952. It supports the Casa Hogar San Juan, a retirement home in Mexico City for 50 to 60 elderly people, offering a range of activities, including religious ceremonies, visits, and medical service.

Because the percentage of HIV positive mothers over the age of 15 has increased considerably, the Association, through its 'Salva a un Niño del SIDA' (Save a child from AIDS) project, continues running transmission prevention programmes, managing courses for mothers and fathers, providing psycho-social counselling and distributing food supplements, enriched milk and hygiene kits for mothers and babies.

'Ayúdame a Crecer' (Help me grow) is a medical nutrition project carried out by the Association in six states of the country, distributing

medicines and nutritional kits, and also toys and clothes for children aged from six months to 12 years.

Since 1996, thanks to the national and international donations to the 'Banco de Medicamentos' (medical supplies bank) programme, the Association has been delivering medicines, medical supplies and equipment to hospitals, medical centres and shelters in 20 states. During the Covid-19 period in 2020, 17,690 medical visits were carried out.

'Emergencias Alerta Orden de Malta' (Order of Malta Emergency Unit) is the relief corps of the Mexican Association which intervenes in the case of natural disasters. It is in contact with Direct Relief, Food for the Poor, AmeriCares and Malteser International to be first responders to distribute medicines and provide support when necessary.

## Panama

In January 2019 the Order signed a Cooperation Agreement with the Republic of Panama to develop joint actions in health and social areas and to provide humanitarian and hospital aid in case of humanitarian emergency.

In the same year the Panamanian Association became the Order of Malta focal point for projects in cooperation with Orden de Malta Venezuela, Malteser International Americas,

the Venezuelan diaspora and other partners, considering their potential relationship with pharmaceutical companies and the possibility of implementing new strategies related to the trading industry.

The Association's activities cover medical assistance and distribution of cash donations, food, medicines, medical supplies, clothing, computers, furniture, and other goods received as donations from other international humanitarian entities, for example, Food For The Poor, and other entities which take care of needy people, the elderly and migrants. In 2020 the Association collaborated in the management and distribution of 16 containers.

The Association supports the Cristo Sana programme of the Vicariate of Darién, which offers general medical care and medicines to disadvantaged people; and the Fundación Casa Hogar - El Buen Samaritano, with distribution of medicines, cleaning supplies and dry food to around 400 HIV-AIDS sufferers, the Asilo San Pedro Nolasco and the Colegio de Nuestra Señora de Fátima, with the donation of a kitchen with cleaning equipment, cleaning supplies and food to benefit 50 seniors and 650 children. The 'Alimenta al Próximo' (Feed thy neighbour) programme is based on the distribution of food among various religious institutions and NGOs, which in 2020 benefitted more than 6,000 people in need.

For the 34th **World Youth Day** in January 2019, 130 Order of Malta volunteers flew to **Panama**, offering assistance and first aid to pilgrims. Although coming from different national first aid corps - Italy, France and Germany - the volunteers wore identical uniforms and were able to interact in their various languages with young pilgrims from many different countries.

On 27 January, Pope Francis took his leave of the 600,000 young people attending the concluding Mass in Campo San Juan Pablo. On the platform, the President of the Panamanian Republic, Juan Carlos Varela Rodríguez and other heads of state were joined by the Grand Hospitaller of the Sovereign Order, Dominique de La Rochefoucauld-Montbel, as the pope expressed his appreciation for the Order of Malta's medical assistance during the Panama gathering. The volunteers, all specialised in accident and emergency care, were present at all the main events, working in close cooperation with the Panamanian first aid, civil defence and fire-fighting services, and with the Vatican Gendarmerie Corps and Swiss Guards.

In 2020 medical equipment was donated to the Hogar San José de las Hermanas Misioneras de la Caridad: more than 24,000 poor were provided with medical assistance, 15,500 received medicines, including rural communities; and food parcels, clothing, hygiene items, beds and items for the care of the sick were donated all over the country.

During Covid-19, the Association implemented the delivery of food, toiletries, masks, hospital equipment and sewing machines as well as material for making protective masks, to various entities and vulnerable groups in the poorest areas of the territory.

## Paraguay

Since 2007 the Servicio de Emergencia Malta has been providing health and emergency care in the Central Department of Paraguay, as well as medical assistance at major events and pilgrimages to the Virgin of Caacupé, and medical and dental care to native populations. In 2019, the Order's Embassy, in cooperation with the Association, received from Food for the Poor a donation of 2,300 blankets and 19,000 kilos of fortified rice to be delivered to the victims of the latest river floods which affected 100,000 families in the Guairà Department.

In the same year, the volunteers opened a lunch hall in Villarica for vulnerable children, where each Sunday they are welcomed for sports, catechism lessons, leisure activities and lunch. Tourmalta# is a new project carried out in Villarica which offers medical care, food and leisure activities to children.

In 2020, the Association delivered blankets to the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of Cerrito, who run a school and a canteen for 265 indigenous children from a very poor community nearby.

## Peru

Since the 1950s, the Order's Association and Embassy have been collaborating to help people in need by offering different support projects all over the country.



Following the agreement signed in 2019 between the Peruvian navy and the Order's Peruvian Association which focussed on social and humanitarian support in hospital ships to help the vulnerable population in the Amazon Region, in 2020 30 medical beds were donated to the Peruvian Navy Hospital by the Order of Malta Foundation 'Aide et Assistance'.

In 2019 the Association collaborated with the Ministry of Defence on a civil protection project in the case of natural disaster, and the management of migrants arriving from Venezuela. The Association organised simulation exercises and courses on the ships of the Peruvian Navy.

In 2020 Malteser Peru implemented healthy activities for the seniors attending the Querecotillo Centre, offering interactive workshops as well as basic medical services. During the pandemic, Malteser Peru focused

on the delivery of non-perishable food and hygiene kits.

The Embassy financially supported a home for 60 students from disadvantaged families in Puerto Maldonado (Tambopada District) and donated pasta to 'Beneficiencia Peru', an NGO of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Peru.

Among the beneficiaries supported by the Association are: 'Casa Gina' in Lima (a home for 16 single mothers aged from 15 to 30 and their children), a home for poor students in the Puerto Maldonado region, two soup kitchens, and the Soberana Orden Militar de Malta school in Villa María del Triunfo district in South Lima.

During the Covid-19 emergency period in 2020, food packages, clothes, toys, medicine and first aid products were delivered to the needy in marginalised villages in the areas of Ate in Eastern Lima, in Manchay, and in Villa Libertad, Carapongo.

Support was also given to the Ministry of Health by ensuring the transport of blood to different hospitals.

### **Puerto Rico**

In 2019 a vaccination programme was carried out in Puerto Rico, in the cities of Toa Baja and Bayamon.

In 2020, during the Covid-19 lockdown, the Delegation continued with its project to provide food, clothing, and nursing services to the homeless, as they do not receive state aid. In 2020, 24,000 hot meals and parcels with non-perishable food were distributed to the needy, as well as 1,000 items of clothing.

The Delegation has made donations for hospital purposes but also to Malteser International, to the Order of Malta Foundation (Miami), to the Children's House Friends of Hope in Haiti and to the Foundation for the Restoration of the Cathedral of San Juan. It donated an electricity generator to the house / clinic of the Servants of Maria in a mountain town, to help the needy elderly, and industrial refrigerators to the Santa Teresa Jornet nursing home.

67 needy parishes were provided with all the necessary articles to be able to resume face-to-face Masses.

### **Suriname**

For many years the Order's Embassy has been supporting the children of the Abadukondre orphanage/boarding school, as well as a home for the elderly of the Sisters of Oord, and St. Vincent's Hospital. The Embassy has been also sponsoring the JOS Foundation and has endorsed the Foundation 'de Mantel' supplying daily food for the elderly and the sick of Paramaribo.

### **United States of America**

The three US Associations of the Order jointly work to raise funds to support the Order's Holy Family Hospital in Bethlehem. In synergy with the Canadian Association, for many years



now they have been carrying out a Prison Ministry programme, which provides spiritual accompaniment to prisoners and their families. Activities include: visiting prisoners on death row; working with the families, and especially the children of those incarcerated, to arrange visits and social services; leading programmes to help the released re-enter society; the distribution of 18,000 English and Spanish language bibles and spiritual guides; and organising pen-pal programmes to allow the incarcerated to connect with people outside

the prison system. A new programme, Books Behind Bars, collects donated books and distributes them to prison libraries.

The American Association operates in over 30 areas, distributing food, clothes and other basic items to the homeless and to migrants. The Association also finances Malteser International Americas projects, both abroad and in the States, as well as the Crudem Foundation which runs a hospital in Haiti. In conjunction with Malteser International Americas, a pilot programme for the vulnerable and neglected

communities in New York City was launched to facilitate the administration of free 'flu shots through six mobile vaccination clinics. In Connecticut, the Malta House of Care mobile medical clinic, run by the Association in cooperation with St Francis Hospital, has set up a drive-through for Covid-19 testing near a busy circular driveway.

Before the end of 2020 the Missouri Area inaugurated the Malta Mobile Ministry, purchasing a new van and training its drivers. In the first months of 2021 it could already assist local charities, including the St Vincent De Paul food bank and the St Louis Criminal Justice ministries, by offering transport services.

The Federal Association is assuring clothes and food distribution for the needy and the homeless, and the activity of various soup kitchens in all the areas where it operates. Within the Prison Ministry project, it provides yarn and knitting supplies for women in prison. It supports a clinic providing health care for women, especially mother-baby wellness, and manages the Malta House of Care free clinic, where telemedicine and free Covid-19 testing are available to the vulnerable population. The Association offers spiritual online courses and supports international programmes through Malteser International Americas.

The Western Association collaborates with other local charities, caring for the poor, the sick, the homeless and the elderly.

It operates a free medical clinic in Oakland, California, which offers different services, such as immunisations, lab tests, X-rays, ECGs, evaluations in dermatology, cardiology, haematology/oncology, neurology, rheumatology, obstetrics and a mobile health clinic with a medical examination room. It also manages a free legal clinic. In 2020, seven volunteer lawyers took care of 70 cases and carried out about 350 legal consultations. The Association operates some soup kitchens and distributes thousands of meals, bags of groceries, hygiene kits, PPE, clothes and basic items to the needy of the area.

In Miami the Cuban Association's outreach clinic, San Juan Bosco, offers medical servic-

es to over 1,200 poor patients every year. Since 2008, the 'Casa de Malta' project has been providing a weekly breakfast, lunch, basic food packages, vocational training, and a health service to the low-income families of the San Juan Bosco Parish in Miami (mostly are immigrants living in 'Little Habana'). In 2019 more than 3,400 breakfasts and lunches and were delivered. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the meals prepared in the soup kitchen were delivered at home, respecting the prevention measures. From May 2020 until the end of the year, the Malta Youth Corps of the Cuban Association prepared and delivered more than 15,000 sandwiches weekly to the St. Augustine parish, which then distributed them throughout the local community.

## Uruguay

The Uruguayan Association has for many years been supporting four shelters in Montevideo: 'La Milagrosa', 'Pablo VI', 'Monseñor Jacinto Vera' and 'Casita del Señor', where

the elderly and the homeless, victims of violence, and single mothers with their children are cared for.

In collaboration with the Order's Embassy, it also provides humanitarian assistance to Venezuelan refugees, supporting the NGOs in charge of them.

Every year during the winter period, hot meals are served each Friday, both on the Association's premises, and on a mobile basis in Montevideo, as well as in the city of Salto.

In 2020, the Order's volunteers distributed 4,500 kilos of non-perishable foodstuffs, 5,000 items of clothing, 300 kilos of cleaning material and toys and other basic items for adults and children to the vulnerable of Montevideo, Salto and Rosario.

The Order's Foundation 'Aid and Assistance' donated 30 hospital beds.

## Venezuela

The Orden de Malta Venezuela helped to establish a focus group for health care delivery and the promotion of education.

A thrice weekly soup kitchen was opened in 2019 in the Chacao Municipality (east of Caracas), with a second one in 2020, in the city of Maracaibo in Zulia State.

In 2020, in collaboration with some local parishes in Caracas, over 10,000 lunches were offered to vulnerable elderly as well as food parcels containing flour, rice, coffee and grains.

Medical supplies were delivered to the Hospital II Materno Infantil Cuatricentenario, the Paediatric Specialties Hospital Foundation and the Veritas Paediatric Hospital in Maracaibo.

The collaboration with the Provive NGO in the educational programme 'Aprendiendo a Querer' (learning to love one another) offers lessons of integrity and vocational skills for children and adolescents in schools located in poor and high-crime-rate areas. With the 'Maniapure' NGO, medical assistance on-the-job training programmes are provided to over 10,000 Creole and indigenous people in the Maniapure region. In 2020 Malteser International set up a mother-and-child project, together with the local NGO SAHEP (Support for Autonomous Higher Education Project).



# ASIA PACIFIC

*The Order of Malta's range of projects is focused on improving health care and living conditions for many thousands of people across Asia Pacific. In this region, the Order's national Associations and Malteser International are at the ready to respond to climate-change pressures, to react to natural and man-made disasters, and to implement programmes in disaster risk reduction.*



## Afghanistan

Malteser International provided basic health care for returnees, IDPs and host communities in Kabul until the end of December 2020. This was followed by a number of procurements for Covid-19 equipment prevention in the first quarter of 2021.

## Armenia

The Order of Malta's Embassy continues to support the school for the hearing impaired in Yerevan, providing the 126 deaf and mute children with food and ensuring lessons and housing in boarding school for half of them. The Embassy also financed renovation works for the school. In January 2021, a container of beds, medical equipment and drugs, donated by the Order's Foundation 'Aide et Assistance', was shipped to Armenia, and the items distributed to the hospital of Etchmiadzin as well as to other hospitals in need in the country.

## Australia

With the 'Coats for the Homeless' project, 6,000

warm, waterproof coats are distributed every year to the homeless all over the country. In 2020 this project was extended to include the distribution of 'care packs', containing water, sunscreen, toiletries, sanitary and hygiene items. This activity means the Order's Association is now engaged with the homeless throughout the year.

The northern central region works closely with the Australian indigenous population by providing food, clothing and blankets, and carries out a programme offering nutritious breakfasts to children at school to ensure they have at least one good meal a day.

The Order of Malta's Australian Natural Disasters Fund is both an emergency aid and a long-term rehabilitation fund for natural disasters: it recently supported people affected by the 2020 bushfires. The first level of response provides for cash and food vouchers delivered directly to victims through their local parishes for immediate relief. The second phase deals with recovery and reconstruction projects for the affected communities.

Order volunteers regularly make home visits to the elderly and are involved in the 'Biogra-

phy programme' which records and publishes the life-stories of terminally ill patients; they also support the provision of quality palliative care. In this field the Order in Victoria has for many years been supporting St Vincent's palliative care, Caritas Christi Hospice in Kew, and is a partner in the Eastern Suburbs Palliative Care Services; in New South Wales members provide ongoing support to St Joseph's Palliative Care Unit in Auburn and in Queensland to St Vincent's Hospital.

The Order's community care vans are staffed by volunteer drivers and nurses, who visit 'hot-spots' to distribute items to help protect those sleeping in the streets and to offer health care to marginalised people in Sydney, Parramatta and Melbourne.

## Bangladesh

Malteser International provides basic health and nutrition services with a focus on maternal and child health in three health centres in the Rohingya refugee camps in Cox's Bazar, as well as psychosocial support and emergency referral to the nearest hospital for vul-



nerable people. The organisation is working to improve water supply and sanitation in 15 schools in host communities.

To strengthen the resilience of refugee host communities, Malteser International is providing new income opportunities and boosting their capacities in disaster risk reduction. In northern Bangladesh, a cash aid project has been implemented through mobile banking for the 2,000 most affected families in the two severely flood-affected districts in the country. The project has been extended to repair and maintain five integrated centres until February 2021.

### Cambodia

For many years the CIOMAL Foundation (Campagne internationale de l'Ordre de Malte contre la lèpre) has been developing projects for early detection and to avoid Hansen's disease transmission, in conjunction with Ordre

de Malte France and the local governmental authorities.

In 2020, the Kien Khleang Leprosy and Rehabilitation Centre – a CIOMAL Hospital - was closed and patients were transferred to other facilities supported by Ordre de Malte France. The former building is being refurbished for other activities of the Order. Meantime, the medical research material has been transferred to the National Leprosy Elimination Programme and to other institutions.

In 2020, Malteser International completed its project to support WASH self-help initiatives in Oddar Meanchey Province and continued to work to improve food and nutrition security for women and children in Siem Reap province.

### Georgia

Since 2008 the Order's Embassy has been providing humanitarian aid to Georgia in var-

ious ways. In 2020 about 50 care-dependent patients received home assistance.

Nursing visits, diapers, medicines, food, 200 wool blankets, 3,000 pairs of shoes, 15,000 pairs of socks, 100 children's pajamas, winter jackets and other types of clothing, all new, were distributed to needy people.

The shelter for the homeless in Tbilisi was opened in 2018 on the premises of the Catholic church of Santa Maria Assunta thanks to an initiative of the Embassy. It offers accommodation, breakfast, medical assistance and the possibility of using a laundry, to those in financial difficulty.

### Hong Kong (China)

The Association of the Order of Malta in Hong Kong has, since 2018, supported the Caritas Lok Yi School, which offers education to students with intellectual disabilities aged 6-18.



Volunteers organise stimulating activities to help students to overcome difficulties and develop their potential.

The Association carries out the Flying Young Programme to help over 60 underprivileged families with children. The Programme provides different activities and relationship-building exercises to enhance family bonds, promotes interaction between parents and children and encourages youth development.

The Hong Kong Association hosted the 3rd Asia Pacific Youth Camp for the Disabled on 23-26 October 2019.

During the Covid-19 emergency, 4,000 surgical masks were distributed to 400 low-income families, food vouchers were donated to 60 needy families in Hong Kong and 70 IT notebooks were given to poor children to allow them to follow online classes.

### India

Ordre de Malte France has been present in Delhi since 1984. It supports six structures, including the reception centre for children 'OM Shanti', located in a poor fishing district in the

region of Pondicherry.

For the socially excluded Dalit and Tribal communities in the Thar District in Rajasthan, Malteser International has continued to work to ensure food security and boost resilience.

### Indonesia

In 2021, after the two strong earthquakes which hit West Sulawesi in January, the Order's Ambassador to Antigua and Barbuda and the Special Envoy to Indonesia sent funds to Caritas Indonesia. The funds meant that Caritas was able to buy truckloads of food and medicines and could deliver them to the parish of Our Lady of the Rosary in Mamuju. Malteser International launched a project to improve the WASH facilities and hygiene customs in the Donggala area, close to the city of Palu, the capital of Central Sulawesi, and is working to increase the livelihood choices available to the local communities.

### Kazakhstan

The Embassy of the Order to Kazakhstan con-

tinues to support the Missionaries of Charity, the local Sisters of St. Mother Teresa in the capital Astana.

### Laos

The work of Ordre de Malte France in Laos is focused on fighting Hansen's disease. The support is carried out through functional rehabilitation and disability prevention activities around the Malta Pavilion, as well as leprosy screening and treatment activities, mobile expertise and skills transfer missions and re-integration of former victims. The activities are carried out by Franco-Vietnamese surgical teams in Vientiane and in the provinces, in particular in Champasak. In 2019 a new agreement with the Ministry of Health to support the Laotian National Programme against leprosy was signed.

### Myanmar

Malteser International has continued to implement a comprehensive programme in the field of malaria and TBC prevention/treatment and

nutrition support, WASH, Disaster Risk Reduction and emergency relief in northern and central Rakhine State. In Kayin State, in March 2020 Malteser International completed a disability inclusive project that strengthened the local structures responsible for disasters and helped communities to be better prepared for future shocks. The Order of Malta's worldwide relief agency is also implementing a three-year project to promote the inclusive peace process and the reintegration of Rohingya refugees through improved access to the social infrastructure.

In Eastern Shan State in the north of Myanmar, Malteser International is implementing part of their Food and Nutrition Security Programme. Work started on a four-year project in the townships of Monghsat and Monghton to construct and rehabilitate social infrastruc-

tures and promote food security in conflict-affected and vulnerable communities.

### Nepal

Malteser International is working on WASH projects and in improving flood resilience in the rural areas of the Nuwakot District. Its projects also focus on expanding livelihood choices and providing mental health and psychosocial support.

### Pakistan

Malteser International provides comprehensive humanitarian and development assistance in the Sanghar district of Sindh province. In 2020 this included measures to help prevent the spread of Covid-19, and to support

families suffering from the economic effects of lockdown.

### Philippines

The Order's Philippines Association sponsored a medical mission in the parish of San Fernando de Dilao in Paco, where volunteers of the Order and from the St Martin de Porres Charity Hospital were able to provide free medical services to over 220 beneficiaries.

In Paranaque City, around 400 patients benefited from free medical services, including x-ray and basic laboratory examinations, conducted by the Order of Malta and its partners, SM Foundation, San Agustin Parish Church and the Parañaque Medical Association.

15,000 thousand pairs of shoes were distributed among the underprivileged school children



and adults in the Order's project areas within the 'Gift of Sharing Programme'.

The Association delivered food parcels and bottles of sanitiser for hygiene promotion to 2,380 families in need, provided sacks of rice to some parishes in Manila, supplied 100 complete sets of PPE (personal protective equipment) to the Philippine General Hospital and Dr. Jose Rodriguez Memorial Hospital and provided 20 sleeping mats for the staff of San Lazaro Hospital who could not get back home

due to public transport lockdown during the first phase of the pandemic.

Malteser International has been working in close cooperation with the Order's Philippines Association since 2009. Throughout 2020, Malteser International continued its project to strengthen the capacities of 13 underprivileged communities, with programmes in disaster risk reduction, water, sanitation and hygiene measures. In 2020 a new project in Mankayan/Benguet was launched to improve

WASH facilities, as well as the EU-funded REACH-project (DRR-disaster risk reduction - combined with renewable energy) in northern Samar. A joint project between Malteser International and the Association in WASH and solid waste management in Benguet was started in November 2020. In 2020, WASH projects in Catarman and Laoang, Northern Samar were concluded successfully.

Typhoon Kammuri/Tisoy devastated parts of northern Samar in December 2019. In response, Malteser International, in coordination with Order's Philippines Association, provided assistance for the reconstruction of homes through the provision of cash grants to 66 families in Laoang, northern Samar.

### Singapore

The Singapore Association financially supports the Assisi Hospice, the Order of Malta Clinic in Timor Leste, the Holy Family Hospital in Bethlehem and some local parishes. A fund-raising for the Lebanese Association's relief efforts after the explosion in Beirut in August 2020 was organised.

The support for the homeless did not stop during the pandemic emergency difficulties and continued throughout the year, purchasing mattresses, pillows, blankets for an emergency shelter, delivering meals and providing the homeless with personal toiletry items.

For the 4th World Day of the Poor and for Christmas, lunch boxes and specially packaged gifts were distributed to 80 beneficiaries, most of whom were lonely elderly people in the Ang Mo Kio area.

### South Korea

Since 2016, Order of Malta Korea has prepared, on the premises of the House of Catholic Love and Peace, lunchboxes for the poor living in the slum area near Seoul Station. In 2019 over 12,600 meals were provided and 12,000 baked loaves of bread were regularly distributed to 150 elderly through the 'Bread for the Weekend' project.





Through the seasonal project Jacket-for-Life, 350 jackets were distributed to the homeless of Seoul in 2019.

Since September 2019, on the first Friday of every month, volunteers working in the 'Free Lunch' project have been preparing and offering meals to 150 seniors at the Myung Hwi Won centre.

In 2020, the Order of Malta Korea built a new kitchen facility 'Francisco's Neighbour' in Changsin-dong (Seoul) to facilitate the preparation of food to be delivered to the elderly and needy of the area.

In 2020, 1,700 relief emergency kits containing food and hygiene items were distributed to adults and children in Seoul, Incheon and Daegu.

### Thailand

Malteser International is carrying out a health and WASH project for over 20,000 refugees from Myanmar in the Mae Ra Ma Luang and Mae La Oon temporary camps. During the Covid-19 emergency period, the programme also implemented three coronavirus-focused projects. The refugees and the host communi-

ties living in the mountain villages around the camps benefit from medical, psycho-social and nursing care in the camp clinics as well as from health screening and dental care. They also receive medicines and hygiene training in the school camps.

### Timor-Leste

In Timor-Leste, since 2017 the Order of Malta has managed a Medical Clinic in Dili, offering free basic primary care and health education to disadvantaged people. Thousands of Timorese have already benefited from the services provided, with 600 patients treated monthly in 2019.

The clinic also runs a dedicated ambulance service, which can transfer patients to the national hospital when necessary. The clinic is funded by vital donations from the Order of Malta's Australian Association.

At the request of the Timor government, in 2019 the clinic's activity was expanded to offer community education, including training groups of educators, expectant mothers and mothers with children and education for the

community on hygiene and the treatment of wounds. Shipments of medicines are regularly delivered to various clinics.

The Australian Association carries out the 'Creating Leaders' scholarship programme, providing payment of school fees and financial assistance to help overcome economic barriers. In the first months of 2021, staff and volunteers from the Order of Malta Embassy travelled to Hera to supply clothing and food to victims in the wake of the terrible floods that recently hit the country.

### Vietnam

The activity of Ordre de Malte France in Vietnam focuses on Hansen's disease: detection, treatment, corrective surgery of its after-effects and social reintegration of former patients. Promoting the transfer of skills to local doctors is still an under-developed area.

The Order's work in Vietnam began with the establishment and operation of a functional rehabilitation department in the Ho Chi Minh City Hospital, which became the Malta Pavilion after its opening in 1992.

# EUROPE

*Because of the pandemic the Order of Malta in Europe has adapted its activities to work alongside the national health services, both in the testing phase and in the subsequent vaccination campaigns. In parallel, it has continued to provide care for displaced persons, refugees and migrants, and training programmes for first-aiders, as well as offering medical and social care services and running hospitals and old people's homes.*



## Albania

After the earthquake that hit the country in November 2019, the Order of Malta's Albanian Relief Corps distributed basic items and offered psychological assistance to 1,200 internally displaced persons (IDPs) assembled in the Durrës stadium. The Order of Malta Italian Relief Corps was also involved in the logistical support, and together with the Italian Civil Protection and Malteser Albania, managed the Thumane camp and the Vlore camp: 291 IDPs were cared for, for one month.

Since 2015 Malteser Albania has been supporting the reintegration of returnees in north Albania, offering psychological, medical and social integration support as well as hygiene kits and food, transport, and assistance in vocational training and employment possibilities.

Malteser Albania provides primary care medical assistance in the remote mountain areas in the north of Albania. In 2020, 1,731 patients were aided.

Since 2017 the Multidisciplinary Malteser Centre in Lezha has been providing services to communities in need, especially to the Roma

in Lezha and Shkodra. The Centre offers educational activities, informative meetings, skills training, awareness and sport activities, all aimed at social integration.

Because of the pandemic, some services were turned into online programmes and the activity of the Centre focused on helping families with food and hygiene packages and health services. Malteser Kindergarten welcomed 75 children, aged from three to six, from needy and vulnerable families, including disabled children, and Roma children. During the pandemic, the staff organised online learning.

The Malteser Consultation and Services Centre specialises in the early identification and treatment of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), children with developmental disorders, and others such as Down syndrome, and provides individual or group therapy, behaviour therapy, parental counselling, and a legal advice and consultation service.

In 2020 the activity of the Community Centre for the Elderly provided online social and medical services to support their 80 beneficiaries. The Centre also provided home food deliveries to 120 elderly people. 'The Meals for the Poor'

project, which was started in January 2020, set up a refectory in the city of Lezha. Because of the pandemic, the service was adapted by sending food boxes to the beneficiaries at home. Medical assistance and medicines were also offered where needed.

The 'Give Your Clothes a New Home!' project, organised by the young volunteers of Malteser Albania in a three-month campaign, resulted in the distribution of 250 clothes packages to needy families in Shkodër and Lezha.

Malteser Albania programmes and projects have been adapted to adhere to the pandemic regulations in force.

In February 2021, on the 25th anniversary of its foundation, the President of Albania granted the Mother Teresa Memorial Award for Social Justice to Malteser Albania, in recognition of its valuable commitment to the people of Albania.

## Austria

Since 1956 the Austrian volunteer service, Malteser Hospitaldienst Austria (MHDA), has been organising regular social work and care services in nursing homes, hospitals and private homes.



In 2020, the relief service managed six large projects, run by 2,060 volunteers, in the fields of care for the elderly, the disabled and children. One of the services provided is ambulance transport to victims of accidents as well as to Covid-19 affected people in Vienna, Innsbruck and Graz. Street testing services for covid were operated by the MHDA in Vienna, Graz, Salzburg and Innsbruck.

In Vienna the Order started a covid vaccination service in nursing homes, and in collaboration with the Johanniter Orden manages a 'Schnupfen-Checkbox', a container for medical assistance for patients with covid symptoms.

The Order supported the installation and management of the field hospitals in the Vienna Exhibition Centre (4,000 beds) and in the Salzburg Exhibition Centre (700 beds).

In the Tyrol, emergency ambulance services were provided at the screening station for suspected infections.

Home delivery services and online communications with home assisted patients (the disabled and the elderly) were implemented.

A disaster relief team is trained to intervene, also in neighbouring countries, in all kinds of natural disasters, and to provide first aid to refugees and migrants. In 2020, through Malteser International, refugee aid was provided in Syria and disaster support in Beirut. In 2020 a project to collect medicines and distribute them to Eastern European countries was organised. Medicines to the value of €800,000 were collected. Malteser Austria's Haus Malta is a home for the elderly in Vienna, where 35 residents receive a full care service and assistance from a professional team.

Malteser Care provides a daily professional service to about 300 disabled people.

Malteser Kinderhilfe is a palliative Care Unit for critically ill children in Amstetten. It supports patients with acute needs, runs a hospice and offers respite and long-term care.

In Vienna, services providing food for the homeless are carried out in cooperation with the Franciscan Order and the Intercontinental Hotel; similar services are offered in Salzburg and Innsbruck.

## Belarus

Since 1996 the Order's Embassy has been providing aid to those in need, in collaboration with Caritas and the Belarussian authorities.

In 2019, the Embassy facilitated the shipment of a cargo of hospital garments, clothes for adults and children, 20 wheelchairs and 20 rolators, which were sent by Order of Malta Switzerland and distributed in Minsk.

In 2020 German Malteser Hilfsdienst, in cooperation with the Embassy, collected goods and financed the shipment of humanitarian equipment to the country.

## Belgium

The three 'La Fontaine' houses for homeless people in Brussels (1996), Liège (2000) and Ghent (2014) provide medical care, shower and laundry facilities, hairdressing, pedicure, sewing, a clothes distribution service and a cafeteria (called Babelcot, where guests can find company as well as soup). In 2019, there



were approximately 21,500 admissions, 19,200 showers, 17,000 clothes washed, and 7,000 nursing care interventions.

Around the country, many social activities such as visits to the elderly, recreational activities, excursions for children and the disabled, a meals distribution project as well as delivery of basic items for the poor, are regularly organised.

Four summer camps for children were able to take place in 2020 as well as a camp for disabled children.

Order of Malta Belgium International Aid develops activities abroad. It supports and performs projects mainly in the health sector in Democratic Republic of Congo and in Lebanon. It also participates in emergency humanitarian actions of the Order, including those of Malteser International.

### Bosnia Herzegovina

The Order's Embassy, in collaboration with German Malteser Hilfsdienst, guarantees an ambulance service in Medjugorje during the pilgrimage season. Since autumn 2019 the Embassy has been supporting Caritas Bosnia Herzegovina to help children in migrant camps

around Sarajevo, and before Easter 2020 more than 350 packages for children were distributed in the Ušivak camp. Migrant children in the Bihać and Ušivak camps are provided with special food and medicines for children.

### Bulgaria

Since 1994 the Order's Embassy has made donations of goods to schools, orphanages, institutions for the disabled, hospices and hospitals throughout the country. In 2019 and 2020 an ambulance for the hospital of Dupnitsa, a minibus for the Franciscan Sisters of Rakovski, and a new ultrasound device for the St Sofia University Hospital for Pulmonary Diseases were donated. Other donations included beds, mattresses, bedside tables and prams for the Dupnitsa hospital, and clothing and sheets for the poor in Sofia and Svistof.

For Christmas 120 gift packages were prepared for the needy families who are assisted by the Sisters of Mother Teresa.

The Order's Embassy donated to the 'St Sofia Rehabilitation Centre for children with cerebral palsy' a virtual reality system with double sensors for floor and wall projections, for the reha-

bilitation of children with neuromotor disorders. Thanks to this physiotherapy device a number of children who had been considered incurable were able to start walking.

The Embassy participated in the 'Bulgaria for Doctors' initiative to help doctors on the front line against Covid-19 by donating seven UV lamps for the disinfection of ambulances.

In 2019, the Order's Swiss Foundation 'Aid et Assistance' provided semi-trailers with wardrobes to three hospitals and the Hospitaller Service of the Order of Malta in Switzerland sent a transport van loaded with food and clothes for the poor of Vidin.

During Pope Francis' visit in May 2019 the Embassy participated in the preparation and distribution of food and water during the main events.

In 2019, a group of Order volunteers organised a 10-day summer camp for 30 disadvantaged children in Velingrad.

The Embassy launched the 'Basic Goods Project Bulgaria' in 2020. It provides a weekly distribution of food boxes to poor families (1,000 boxes distributed to 200 families during 2020), and continued in 2021 with weekly assistance to 50 needy families.

## Croatia

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The volunteer group from Zagreb takes care of old and lonely villagers who live in houses in remote areas.

In 2019 the Order's Embassy financed a Croatian group of 12 disabled children and their caregivers to participate in the Order's International Youth Summer Camp in Germany.

The Embassy also supplies Caritas Croatia with medical protective equipment and financial support.

After the strong earthquakes that struck an area not far from Zagreb between the end of December and the beginning of January 2021, a consortium set up by the Order's Embassy to Croatia, together with Malteser Hilfsdienst Germany, Caritas Croatia, the diocese of Sisak and the Austrian association "Bauern helfen Bauern", constructed wooden houses for 1,500 displaced families.

## Cyprus

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The Order's Embassy supports the Makarios Children's Hospital premature ward in Nicosia and the Kormakitis programme, offering medical equipment and full medical support to refugees.

Jointly with Caritas Cyprus, the Embassy dispenses dry food for refugees and poor people and, with the support of the Global Fund for Forgotten People, runs a medical supplies programme for some 300 displaced persons per year.

## Czech Republic

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The Order's relief organisation, Maltéžká Pomoc, carries out activities targeted at children, seniors, people with disabilities and prisoners: in 2019, they provided 15,957 hours of service and assisted 867 people in need. 103 families were helped with daily transport to the special schools for the disabled. Volunteers arranged visits to children with disabilities in specialised institutions and orphanages, as well as organising summer camps and weekend events. The lonely elderly are regularly assisted in their

homes or in retirement homes, with special care for those with Alzheimer's disease. Prisoners are supported in negotiations with authorities and receive pastoral assistance and correspondence to provide assistance in difficult moments. The Grand Priory manages the primary school of the Knights of Malta in Kladno which is attended by some 120 pupils and the Order of Malta Gymnasium in Skuteč, with 187 pupils. Its Higher Professional School of Nursing in Prague has around 180 students who are offered practical experience in seven high-quality hospitals or healthcare facilities, including those specialised in palliative care and children with disabilities.

The Grand Priory also assists refugees by distributing Covid-19 care packages, vitamins, Christmas presents for children, and laptops for home schooling. In 2019 over 500 displaced persons in need were supported, including a group of Middle Eastern Christian refugees. Others were helped in the Order's community centre.

The youth organisation of the Order, Ceska Malteska Mladez, focuses its activities on bringing support to the lonely, helping families with children while their parents are at work, providing services to hospitals, maintaining online contacts with young disabled, and organising spiritual retreats, cultural events and the Maltese Summer Camp for disabled youth.

Volunteers offer assistance in the Czech Inn for the homeless, a hotel opened by the Municipality of Prague which hosts 65 homeless. They are involved in the management of the institution, overseeing the administration of meals, cleaning, medical care, psychological support and prevention measures.

## France

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The activities of Ordre de Malte France are organised under four care categories: health, solidarity, first aid and training. The organisation relies on the help of over 10,500 permanent volunteers.

Ordre de Malte France runs 14 medical facilities in France, focusing on the assistance of chil-

dren and adults with disabilities, and the elderly affected by Alzheimer's disease and autism. The organisation assisted 1,502 in 2019.

In addition to night 'maraudes' for the homeless, the social exclusion commitment of Ordre de Malte France covers the management of soup kitchens, night shelters and professional support for social reintegration.

The pandemic forced but also inspired it to adapt 70% of its activities.

Following the 'Petits-déjeuners en Carême' programme - which annually involved about 56,000 young people from all over France taking part in the collection of food, hygiene products and donations, for the equivalent of more than 47,000 breakfasts for the most disadvantaged people - a new initiative, the 'Sourires de P'tits Déj', has replaced it, with a country-wide message campaign for the beneficiaries.

'Les Repas Solidaires' is another campaign aimed at financing food delivery.

A new all-in-one street service was launched in 2020: 'Soli'Malte' which is an emergency service with four integrated services - food relief, health assistance, hygiene kit distribution and psychological support. Already operating in a dozen large French cities, the services are carried out by 1,500 volunteers, rescuers and health workers.

In 2020, 50 delegations and the Departmental Intervention Units of Ordre de Malte France operated on the field, mostly in response to the consequences of Covid-19, by offering deliveries of food and medicines, street interventions, ambulance services, care for the elderly, a social taxi service for the housebound, and other social services. The ambulance service increased in 2020 and hospitals and medical centres were supported in triage operations and with drive-through test centres.

13 Departmental Intervention Units provided screening and support missions for residential care homes and for the Paris Emergency Medical Assistance Service.

Ordre de Malte France also carries out many activities abroad, with projects in 26 countries in Africa and South-East Asia, supporting around 350,000 people.

## Germany

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The Order of Malta in Germany operates an extensive range of care programmes across the country through its relief corps, Malteser Hilfsdienst. Established in 1953, it is now one of the largest charitable service providers in Germany. A million donors, 33,300 professionals and 52,000 volunteers are involved in the medical and social assistance it provides in 700 locations.

Care stretches from support for high schoolers, to young drug addicts, to the homeless, to those with handicaps, to the elderly with dementia. It is carried out through 6 hospitals, 32 residential homes, three high schools, 36 facilities for youth work and drug addiction treatment, as well as day clinics, migration centres (also for unaccompanied minors), soup kitchens and 250 rescue stations. Malteser Hilfsdienst runs outpatient care services in 33 cities across the country. The organisation's work in civil protection includes providing first aid, and training and rescue services.

A significant percentage of medical transportation throughout Germany, including assistance during events, first aid on the street, medical transfers from house to hospital and hospital to hospital is carried out by Malteser.

Special attention is also given to people suffering from dementia, with focused initiatives like 'Café Malta', a resource-oriented care approach where patients can meet for breakfast or coffee, get involved in activities (reading, painting, dancing, etc.) and enjoy the company of others. During Covid-19 a special crisis management team was set up to coordinate all actions and to implement general protocols for both inpatient facilities and outpatient social services.

Malteser hospitals, part of the national health system network, have been following local pandemic plans. Necessary prevention measures were implemented in all hospitals, for example, setting up specific protocols to admit patients, expanding intensive care capacities, postponing elective surgeries, limiting external visits. Rapid antigenic tests were introduced in all Malteser facilities. Similar regulations were

imposed in the residential care homes, in the refugee centres and in youth facilities.

Quarantine facilities (i.e. in hotels), pre-screening stations in front of hospitals, and drive-through test centres were set up to face the first wave of the pandemic.

Ambulance flights and airport connection transports were organised for patients from neighbouring countries to be treated in German hospitals.

The three Malteser schools were able to reopen at the end of April 2020 with an exceptionally high level of discipline for covid measures. After the initial stop, first aid training was able to restart with some restrictions.

Social services were retained throughout the pandemic even though in-presence assistance had to be suspended. Alternative volunteer services were developed, such as shopping services, telephone visiting services, mask sewing. 4,200 helpers were involved in these activities, reaching approximately 11,000 beneficiaries. Traditional services for the elderly, the homeless and the disabled were adapted to the new situation.

Since the start of the immunisation campaign at the end of December 2020, the Order of Malta in Germany was involved in the management of 42 vaccination centres.

## Great Britain

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The British Association of the Order of Malta has kept its focus on care for the elderly, the homeless, and support for the lonely. However, due to the pandemic, some of the projects have been curtailed for several months, whilst others have been transformed to operate a reduced service. In London, the two soup kitchens reopened after months of closure, with a controlled number of guests able to attend. During the pandemic, a third soup kitchen was opened in south London, with guests permitted distanced sittings and meals being delivered to local elderly housebound. The weekly 'breakfast club' was able to continue, with a flexible arrangement, providing food outside only or in takeaway packs, and is now back to full strength; the soup kitchens in other cities are planned to reo-

pen when permitted. Throughout the 12-month lockdown, members and Companions (the Order's auxiliary organisation) ran a delivery service of clothes and toiletries for the London homeless housed in central London hotels and hospices – amounting to the packing and delivery of over 60,000 items.

The Orders of St John Care Trust, the country's second largest provider of not-for-profit care homes for the elderly, which has 4,500 staff for 3,500 residents, has closely followed the Covid-19 guidelines to protect its guests. The Order's Nehemiah Project, launched in 2017, continues its focus on rehabilitating male former prisoners with a history of addiction.

In Scotland, the Dial-a-Journey programme, which has been in service for over 25 years, has had to reduce its activities as it reviews what kind of help for the elderly housebound, and school transport for young disabled, may be needed in the future. Ongoing initiatives to collect food donations and deliver them to Aberdeen Cathedral for the homeless have helped the very poor.

Members, volunteers and Companions of the Order have packed hundreds of parcels of clothing and essentials for delivery around the country to those in need. Meantime, the youth group (Order of Malta Volunteers) have kept contact with their disabled guests, sending seasonal parcels and visiting them at home, where possible.

## Hungary

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The Order's Hungarian Charity Service (Magyar Máltai Szeretetszolgálat - MMSz) with its 5,000 staff and 15,000 volunteers is active in 350 locations through 142 local groups, assisting a daily average of 13,000 people in nearly 300 institutions, and tens of thousands more through its assistance programmes and charitable activities. Health care activities cover a hospital, nursing homes, consulting rooms, a mobile pulmonary screening station, a medical device rental service and a vocational/ apprentice school. The organisation also operates an emergency service in times of natural disasters.



In 2019 the Service was involved in various integration programmes to help refugees from Venezuela, mostly of Hungarian origin, and Pakistani Christian families from Thailand.

The Order's Hungarian Charity Service is a leading partner in the European programme to promote social inclusion of Roma people and, in cooperation with the Order's Embassy and the Ambassador for the Roma, runs several projects for the social integration of Roma families, especially catering for children in Tarnabod, Erk, Pecs and Budapest. It also provides support for other projects in Slovakia and Ukraine.

Thanks to an important donation from abroad for youth works in Hungary, MMSz was able to buy a former small guest house near a lake in the south of Hungary to be used as a holiday centre for 25/30 children from Roma and very poor families.

In 2020 the Charity Service supported Malteser International's programme for Muslim refugees in Bangladesh. In another project, the Hungarian Association and the MMSz financed the reconstruction of a small Catholic hospital in the eastern part of Aleppo, Syria, creating 15 emergency beds, the construction of a new wing

with specialised departments in gynaecology, dentistry, otorhinolaryngology and a laboratory. During the pandemic the Charity Service was very active in disseminating health information to MMSz institutions and to poor rural areas. It made its own disinfection products as well as washable and re-usable face masks in the textile factory of Tiszabura (1,500 masks a day) and in the Göd workshop for mentally and multi-disabled people, within the government integration programme for Roma people.

Its 'Pay Early Campaign' supported local small businesses whose services could be purchased in advance to save them from going bankrupt. The purchased products or services can be used when the pandemic is over.

Thanks to the strict covid preventive measures, very few cases of infection were detected in the 31 care homes which the Charity Service runs and which house 1,895 residents.

In collaboration with other charity organisations, a central warehouse to store medical and hygiene items and coordinate distribution, through recorded vouchers, was set up.

Thousands of 10 kilos non-perishable food packages were distributed to the needy and poor throughout the country.

Internet chat fora and daily phone calls were organised for the elderly and lonely and an online psychological counselling service was set up for drug addicts.

The night shelters for the homeless were kept open and the 'street care' service was able to operate regularly with distributions of blankets and food.

The 24/7 medical centre for homeless patients in the Batthyány tér headquarters has introduced a new protocol for the admission of patients: 20-40 patients a day who receive food, can take a shower and wash and dry their clothes, operating in two-hour cycles with a cleaning and disinfection break in between.

MMSz also donated 100,000 masks and a number of boxes of disinfectant to the Order's Relief Service in Romania.

During the first months of the pandemic, kindergartens and playgrounds were closed while schools moved to distance learning, but maintaining the provision of meals.

On 1st September 2020 the 2,200 students of the 12 schools managed by MMSz were able to start their academic year at each school.

## Ireland

The Irish Association carries out an extensive range of community services throughout the country, thanks to the work of its members and the volunteers of its Ambulance Corps.

Activities focus on supporting the homeless, the elderly and people with disabilities. Health care services are also offered.

Although the premises of Malta Services Drogheda were closed in the period of the Covid-19 emergency, its staff continued their activities by managing a community and remote support and assistance service for food, medical prescriptions, household baking products, as well as sustainable gardening projects. All activities were carried out in accordance with national regulations.

Through the Knight Run homeless programme in Dublin, the Order provides food, clothing and medical support to the homeless.

Specific Covid-19 training was given to all volunteers via online video conferencing.

In 2020, the main tasks of the Ambulance Corps Unit were to give support to local communities, which involved transferring patients to hospitals and nursing homes, delivering medicines, distributing Covid-19 test kits and specialist equipment to hospitals and clinics, and supporting numerous Covid-19 assessment centres throughout the Dublin metropolitan area seven days a week.

## Italy

The Order in Italy is made up of three Grand Priorities - Rome, Lombardy and Venice, Naples and Sicily - and an Association. It also counts on 32 Delegations, the Order's Italian Relief Corps and a Military Corps.

The Association manages the San Giovanni Battista hospital in Rome. It has 240 beds, a neuro-rehabilitation unit for cerebral trauma patients, a 'Reawakening Unit' for patients recovering from coma, one of the few in Italy, a vascular and orthopaedic rehabilitation centre, a day care centre and a health centre. There are 350 staff. In 2019, 2,500 patients were hospitalised.

Altogether, the Italian Association employs 550 professionals and 60 volunteers and manages 13 health centres throughout the country, including four multi-specialist centres, six centres for the diagnosis and treatment of diabetes, and three dental clinics. Around 54,000 diabetic patients are treated annually in the Order's facilities. In 2019, over 2,000,000 medical consultations were carried out.

The Grand Priory of Rome dedicates effort and funds to relieve 'new forms of poverty'. During the pandemic, its soup kitchens immediately adapted their organisation to continue their service, with outdoor delivery of hot meals in single-serve containers. Regular street services to distribute food parcels to the homeless were also organised during lockdown periods.

Great efforts were made for home delivery of medicines, as well as in supporting the elderly and lonely with listening and companionship through modern means of communication.



Personal protective equipment and foodstuffs were distributed to religious institutions and communities.

In 2019, the Grand Priory, in a project abroad, financially supported the upgrading of the maternity and neonatology ward at the Italian hospital in Karak, Jordan.

The Grand Priory of Lombardy and Venice, with the help of 1,100 volunteers, was able in 2020 to assist about 950 families and hundreds of homeless in the north of the country, distributing more than 24,000 meals and 6,100 kilos of food; in 2019, 125,000 meals were distributed, and 70,000 medical examinations were carried out.

The Grand Priory of Lombardy and Venice has focused its activities on assisting and caring for people suffering from cognitive decline and dementia and on assisting caregivers. A cognitive stimulation project for Alzheimer's

disease has been developed in Venice and Genoa, applying the 'Spector Protocol' to patients in the early stages. The results have been very positive. In 2019, the project was extended to Novi Ligure, Tortona and Milan. The Grand Priory of Naples and Sicily manages two foster homes in Naples, where needy families of different nationalities are hosted, free of charge, for the length of the hospitalisation of their children who are suffering from serious diseases. It has also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with local partners to set up a project for the Covid-19 screening of the homeless. Soup kitchens and food collections and deliveries are the main action focus for the members and volunteers of the Grand Priory. The Casa del Pellegrino soup kitchen is sited next to the Shrine of Pompei and offers around 130 seats per day where pilgrims can rest and

eat. Before the pandemic more than 36,000 meals a year were distributed to pilgrims. Many social and humanitarian activities are carried out by the Italian Relief Corps of the Order of Malta (CISOM). With its 4,000 volunteers, organised in 143 groups, CISOM is active in the fields of civil protection and social and emergency interventions in Italy. Its volunteers were very busy during the pandemic, with assistance ranging from the construction of the Covid-19 hospitals in Milan and Civitanova Marche, to the daily distribution of food, medicines, hygiene kits, masks, and even laptops for home-schooling, as well as to the psycho-social assistance offered to the population's most vulnerable groups. As well as intervening in natural disasters and carrying out social and humanitarian activities, the Military Corps provides daily medical assistance to the Italian army. The volunteer soldiers of the Military Corps, who possess specific professional skills, are employed in teaching activities for armed forces personnel. During the Covid-19 emergency the Military Corps mobilised 500 of its volunteers to offer technical assistance to set up field hospitals, to patrol city streets and to support local health authorities with the national vaccination campaign and screening programmes throughout the country.

## Latvia

The Embassy collaborates with Malteser Hilfsdienst, Caritas and with other Catholic organisations in Riga, Liepaja, Soldus and Kuldiga for humanitarian works. 150 children from underprivileged families assisted by Caritas, are offered Easter eggs and Christmas gifts each year.

## Lithuania

The Order's Relief Service in Lithuania, Maltos Ordino Pagalbos Tarnyba (MOPT), has volunteers in over 40 towns in the country. The Embassy collaborates and helps the activities of the Relief Service. In 2020, its 'Meals on Wheels' programme

provided more than 132,000 hot meals to 570 beneficiaries in 26 towns, with more than 120 employees and volunteers taking part. The 'Home Care Project' was regularly carried out in 21 cities, and additionally in another 11 cities when needed during the special events of 2020. The project involved about 400 volunteers, attending to 2,600 lonely, sick, elderly people. The Order's Relief Service managed five seniors clubs in 2020 (in Vilnius, Kaišiadorys, Žiežmariai, Švenčionėliai and Zarasai) attended by about 105 elderly who participated in the educational and cultural programmes offered. In 2019 other support activities and special events were carried out, benefitting more than 2,600 people in 38 cities. Three day care centres provided services for 50 elderly people in 2020.

The Order's Relief Service runs a youth centre in Utena, and thanks to 100 volunteers it manages 16 childcare day centres, taking care of around 340 youngsters.

The annual campaign to collect school supplies and toys for poor children delivered items to around 1,280 children from special institutions and to families in need and to Malteser childcare day centres.

'Let's Go' is a transportation service for those with disabilities. In 2020, 1,300 people in Vilnius and other cities were conveyed in four specially adapted vans and one ambulance.

Other activities carried out by members, volunteers and paramedics of the Order include first aid at public events and in schools, fundraising campaigns and volunteer training.

Young Malteser involves more than 500 volunteers in more than 25 Lithuania cities and towns.

In 2020 Maltos Ordino Pagalbos Tarnyba held a summer camp (82 participants from 15 cities), a 'Good Deeds Weekend' (230 participants from 13 cities), a 'Connecting Generations' initiative (120 volunteers), four training sessions for new groups and 14 groups for regular training (22 days in total).

The '54+' project financed by the European Social Fund aims to strengthen soft skills in people over 54 years old but not yet retired, as

well as to promote volunteering among them. Over 160 people were involved in professional training, creativity, conflict management, cooperation, entrepreneurship and IT skills.

In 2019 the Order's Relief Service signed a Co-operation Agreement with the municipality of Vilnius in the field of civil protection. It includes first aid services, care and maintenance for relief forces and those affected, warning and information sharing, transport of the disabled or sick.

The Order implemented the 'Support for Hospitals' project, mobilising volunteers for Covid-19 emergency management and providing medical equipment and hygiene kits to 47 health-care institutions.

## Luxembourg

Since 2016 the Premier Secours de l'Ordre de Malte Luxembourg has supported the homes for refugees managed by Caritas, by distributing hygiene kits.

The Mobile Library Project, started in 2017, continues with the aim of welcoming and integrating refugees: volunteers visit refugee centres with a mobile library which offers residents the possibility of borrowing books in different languages.

During the winter period breakfasts are distributed in the parish premises of Esch-sur-Alzette and Bonnevoie and basic and hygiene items, clothing, sleeping bags and insulating floor mats are offered to those in need.

Two first aid courses were run in 2019.

First aid activities and visits to the elderly were performed reduced during the pandemic period, but continued.

A 'Back to School' project was started in 2017. And in 2019, 450 bags full of school supplies were distributed to children from disadvantaged families in Romania, and to young refugees living in foster homes in the Grand Duchy. Since 1974, the 'Meals on Wheels' project has delivered an average of 1,000 meals every year to the elderly and sick in the city of Luxembourg. Café Malte, set up in 2015, is a meeting centre for elderly and lonely people.



## Malta

The Association, many volunteers and the Embassy carry out numerous activities focusing on support for the elderly, immigrants, the poor and the sick.

The Order supports the Alberto Marvelli Residence which cares for young homeless, offering them temporary living quarters.

In September 2020, the official opening of the Blessed Gerard Residence in Gwardamanga was celebrated. It accommodates single migrant mothers and their minor children.

Volunteers organise the purchase and distribution of foodstuffs and other essential items to families in need in Malta and Gozo, and to the elderly home run by the Little Sisters of the Poor. At Christmas over 120 boxes containing food, toiletries, clothes and toys are distributed to religious institutions, orphanages, care homes for the elderly and underprivileged families.

The main programme on the island of Gozo

is a special transport service which takes patients in wheelchairs to hospitals, and provides transport for the elderly for their various needs. Visits to the elderly and the sick are carried out regularly, as well as first aid services for a number of religious events.

Members of the Association visit young foreign inmates at the Corradino Correctional Facility and give them psychological support to help them in their rehabilitation programme.

In 2019, the Family Fun Day programme hosted 300 parents and children from socially and economically challenging backgrounds.

## Moldova

During the winter period the Embassy's charitable soup kitchen daily distributed warm meals and beverages to the poor and the elderly. 2,400 meals were prepared and given out in 2019, thanks also to the support of the Grand Priory of Austria.

For Christmas and New Year, elderly and poor people receive parcels from the Embassy's soup kitchen, containing durable foodstuffs, fruits and hygiene items; they are also distributed to the needy in a village near Chisinau.

In 2020, from April to December, 850 home deliveries of durable foodstuffs and hygiene items were donated to the elderly and disabled whom the Order assists.

In 2019 the Polish Association of the Order of Malta donated first-aid equipment to the Chisinau fire brigade. The Order also provided rescue training and equipment for 120 firefighters.

## Monaco

Since 2011 the Monegasque Association has been supporting the Cardio-thoracic Hospital Centre of Monaco, to enable children from poor families to be treated free of charge.

The Embassy financially supports the 'Princesse Charlene de Monaco Foundation' which focuses on teaching children how to swim, and water safety.

For World Leprosy Day the Association collects funds to be donated to projects fighting this neglected disease.

## Netherlands

The Dutch Association supports and manages, together with the Johanniter Orden, the Hospice of St John in Vleuten.

Since 2014, members of the Order of Malta and of the Johanniter Orden, twice a year organise Jan's Day outings aimed at offering a wonderful day experience to children coming from needy families.

## North Macedonia

For many years the Order's Embassy has supported the Sisters of Mother Teresa and the Catholic Parish in Skopje as well as collaborating with SOS Children Villages.

Since 2018 the Embassy has provided 30 meals on a weekly basis to the poor in Skopje. In 2019 the Order donated medical equipment

to the Paediatric Department of the Mother Teresa Hospital in Skopje, and gave items such as beds, sheets and blankets to the Sisters of Mother Teresa. For Christmas the Embassy organised a party with entertainment, meals and gifts for over 60 poor children.

## Poland

The Polish Association, together with its relief organisation, Maltańska Służba Medyczna (Pomoc Maltańska), manages a wide range of assistance programmes for the needy, through various centres in the country.

Since 2009, the 'Archangel Michael Social Welfare Home' for schizophrenic patients in Szyldak, located near Olsztyn, is managed by the Order of Malta in Poland. In 2020 it treated 100 inpatients and 16 outpatients. There are 50 staff, most of whom are qualified therapists. In Warsaw Order volunteers, in cooperation with the Foundation of St John of Jerusalem, prepare and distribute meals to about 40 people twice a week.

During 2020, meals-on-wheels programmes were increased; 10,000 Covid-19 tests were distributed to hospitals; funds and hygiene materials were collected and distributed to the hospital in Barczewo and to the home for the mentally ill in Szyldak. In Barczewo the Order runs the Maltese Assistance Centre of Blessed Gerard, which provides 15 beds for patients requiring chronic mechanical ventilation and 62 beds for chronic patients, including the terminally ill, comatose or those in a vegetative state. In Katowice, 300 medical and paramedic volunteers work with the homeless, people with disabilities, the elderly and the lonely.

Basic first aid training and qualified first aid courses are also organised. Another important area of activity is the provision of emergency medical care at cultural, sporting and religious events.

In Cracow the Maltese Centre for Assistance to Disabled Children cares for over 600 disabled children and their families, providing a range of specialist services such as speech therapy, autism care, mental and health care. Preschool

daily rehabilitation activities are offered to about 70 children, especially those with advanced forms of disability, both physical and intellectual. Scientific and teaching activities for staff and members are also implemented. 200 volunteers work in the Centre. During over 14 years of activity, 8,000 families with disabled children have been assisted.

In Poznań the Maltese Assistance Specialist Oncological Outpatient Clinic' has carried out over 87,000 medical consultations in the last 20 years.

The 'Malteser Centre for Geriatrics and Gerontology', co-financed by the city of Poznań, provides support to about 450 patients each year. The Malteser Specialist Medical Offices carry out free-of-charge tests and specialist consultations in internal diseases, cardiology, orthopaedics, gynaecology, endocrinology, pulmonology, ophthalmology and urology.

At Easter, 1,000 food packages were donated to the soup kitchen of the Albertine Sisters and a fundraising campaign was launched to provide the Elizabethan Sisters with food for 300 needy people on a daily basis.

In collaboration with the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs first aid Covid-19 training was organised for 800 policemen, 800 public transport drivers, 800 teachers and 80 health workers in Ukraine and 41 firemen in Moldova.

## Portugal

The Order of Malta's activities in Portugal are highly diversified thanks to the actions of the Volunteer Corps of Order of Malta and the Portuguese Association. During the first Covid-19 lockdown in 2020, 75 homeless people were brought in from the streets and transferred to the Joaquim Urbano Old Hospital. Guests received food, personal care (shower and clothing services) and medical surveillance as a check for Covid-19 symptoms. The volunteers also set up 20 Covid-19 campaign tents in front of hospitals and welfare institutions.

In 2020, 150 homeless were assisted every week in Porto and provided with health support and clothing. In Lisbon, a team of 24 volunteers organised seasonal support for the homeless in the Casal Vistoso shelter centre.



The residents of some religious care homes in Lisbon and Porto received parcels of food, hygiene products and other basic items.

On the occasion of World Day of the Poor, a nationwide food collection campaign was launched to support 90 families in Porto, Lisbon, Alcanena, and Algarve, in addition to the ongoing support for 40 vulnerable families.

The Centro Menino Deus in Lisbon has received food, health screening, school materials, clothing; English language classes were organised for 150 children.

The Prison Ministry project offers regular spiritual assistance, and parcels of clothing and religious items to inmates in Caxias and Viseu Prison establishments. The project has created a Social Fund designed to give financial support to prisoners when they are released from prison. Usually, every May and October the Order's Volunteer Corps offers medical care, meals and shelter to pilgrims walking to the Sanctuary of Fatima. First aid posts are set up on the main roads to the Sanctuary starting from 200 kilometres both north and south. The Order's volunteers provide the same assistance to pilgrims at the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lapa and in Santiago de Compostela.

## Romania

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The Order's relief organisation, Serviciul de Ajutor Maltez în România (SAMR), with 17 active branches and approximately 1,200 volunteers, carries out various programmes for children, the disabled, the elderly and the Roma, as well as for other vulnerable groups.

With its five first aid centres in Baia Mare, Cluj-Napoca, Micfalău, Satu Mare and Sfântu Gheorghe it also runs training courses in first aid and participates in emergency interventions.

In Cluj-Napoca the day centre for children with disabilities, opened in 1993, helps 22 children and their families develop skills for the children to live independently, so that later they can be integrated into special or even mainstream education.

In Bucharest the after-school programme for children from vulnerable families, started in 2011, is aimed at children, primary and second-

ary school students, with a high level of risk of social exclusion. The 20 beneficiaries, mostly Roma, are provided with lunch, homework and educational support, information sessions promoting tolerance and non-discrimination, how to adopt a healthy life, non-violent behaviours, and socialising activities.

The 'Sfântul Iosif Centre' for primary social services in Satu-Mare supports 160 street children in various educational, counselling, recreation, creativity development, and hygiene activities. And there are education projects for poor children in Baia Mare and Dorobanti.

In the Dorobanti Social Centre for disabled and elderly people, 40 elderly and adults with locomotor deficits are permanently assisted.

In Cluj-Napoca, Timișoara and Bucharest, volunteers care for around 130 elderly people providing hot food on a daily basis, social assistance services and permanent monitoring.

The 'St. Ioan Home for the Elderly' in Timișoara continues to provide care and medical services to 20 deprived elderly people.

In Valea Crișului 12 Roma children from the most vulnerable families benefit from riding lessons, along with educational activities.

The night shelter for the homeless in Sfântu Gheorghe offers tailored social, medical, psychological and hygiene support services. In spite of all the restrictions imposed by the pandemic, SAMR managed to run its general activities, continuing to help vulnerable people, distributing food and basic items. 15,000 face masks and thousands of PPE and hygiene kits were donated to schools, hospitals and marginalised communities.

All group activities were suspended, except for the residential centres in Dorobanti and Timișoara, and the night shelter for the homeless in Sfântu Gheorghe. Some activities, for example, after-school programmes and physical rehabilitation, were able to be re-adapted to online formats. 5,800 masks were distributed to 2,000 Catholic priests in Romania thanks to the collaboration of the Order's entities in Germany and Austria. The first provided stocks of masks and the second helped with the delivery both in Hungary and Romania.

## Russian Federation

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Humanitarian activities in the Russian Federation are run by Malteser Social Centres in Moscow and St Petersburg.

Activities in the Moscow centre include distribution of food, necessities and clothing; there were 97,800 distribution services in 2020. The centre provides assistance to elderly and disabled people, home food delivery services for the bedridden, support for families with children through the 'Good Food' programme (926 families benefitted in 2020), educational programmes, first aid courses and language courses for children and adults.

The centre in St Petersburg carries out a variety of programmes, for example, the 'Canteen for the Needy', preparing and serving daily hot meals to 250 poor and elderly, totalling around 49,500 meals a year. The 'Mobile Shelter for the Homeless' provides accommodation, distributes hot meals, and offers transportation to medical examinations. The 'Emergency Assistance' project provides emergency kits and food assistance to families experiencing acute food shortages, and temporary accommodation for families with young children who are left homeless for various reasons. The 'Mother and Child' project offers social, psychological, legal and medical care to mothers in need with children up to two years of age, plus a kindergarten service.

## San Marino

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The Order's Embassy donated a batch of surgical masks and hydroalcoholic gel to the Social Security Institute of the Republic of San Marino. In 2020, the Italian Relief Corps, in agreement with the Order's Embassy and the Civil Protection of San Marino, installed a multifunctional tent near the hospital for anti-covid health services.

## Scandinavia

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The Scandinavian Association encompasses five northern European countries: Denmark, Finland,

Iceland, Norway and Sweden. In 2019 the five countries together launched a fundraising project to support the Holy Family Hospital in Bethlehem. In Denmark members help with soup kitchens in Copenhagen and with a range of tasks which offer help to immigrants. In 2019 the Order worked in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training jointly with the St John's volunteer organisation. In Finland and Sweden, the Order organises activities for the elderly and sick in the main cities. During 2019, members of the Order in Iceland were active in helping the Missionaries of Charity in Reykjavik and on an individual basis caring for the sick and elderly. In Norway, undocumented immigrants are assisted by a volunteer physician.

## Serbia

The Embassy, through the 'A Hot Meal in a Cold Winter' project supports the Children's Shelter, an institution which takes care of young people aged from seven to 18, who are street children, or victims of violence, abuse, human trafficking,

or parental neglect.

As part of the 'Make a Wish' project the Order's Embassy sponsors surgical operations in private hospitals either in the country or abroad. It also carries out humanitarian activities: in 2020 food and basic necessities were distributed to poor homes and to the Mladenovac Gerontological Centre which houses up to 300 elderly.

The Embassy made a larger donation of housing equipment to the St Petka Institution for the mentally disabled, run by Orthodox nuns.

Respiratory masks were donated to the Nis Hospital. A disinfection tunnel (which eliminates traces of coronavirus from surfaces and tissues in a few seconds) was donated to the Psychiatric Hospital in Kovin.

Thousands of washable and reusable Covid masks were donated to religious institutions.

In 2021 the Order collaborated with the Ministry of Health to provide the Clinical Centre of the Republic of Serbia with neuromonitoring devices to perform spinal surgeries on children who suffer from leg spasticity.

## Slovakia

Despite the Covid-19 restrictions, Malteser Aid Slovakia expanded its services significantly during 2020. It made over 30,000 visits to the elderly and homeless in Bratislava, supplying them with warm meals, protective equipment, clothes and sanitary articles.

FFP2 masks and respirators were donated to homes for the elderly, local police, firefighters, local municipalities as well as to parishes, hospices and hospitals in Bratislava, Nitra and Topolčany.

Volunteers launched a project to sew face masks for people in need, and distributed medicines and pharmaceutical products to isolated people. A screening tent was opened at the entrance of the hospital of Nitra, and assistance for Covid-19 testing was also offered in Bratislava and Topolčany.

Malteser Aid Slovakia, with the support of the Order's Embassy and the municipality of Nitra, continued to operate the Roma project in Orechov Dvor, through the centre for young mothers and after-school education. In 2020 two new Roma projects were launched in Žarnovica and Topolčany.

Also in 2020, volunteers organised a week long national summer camp for young disabled people, as well as physical and virtual gatherings, local pilgrimages, visits to inmates in Nitra prison, and numerous activities in the hospice in Nitra.

## Slovenia

The Association, supported by the Order's Embassy and over a hundred volunteers, carries out different activities for those in need, the elderly and the Roma.

Approximately 70 families are regularly supported with food, clothes and hygiene items. Protection items have been distributed to religious communities, homes for the elderly, kindergartens and other humanitarian organisations.

Household assistance is offered to lonely elderly people.





Basic technology to aid the learning process was provided in an elementary school with a high number of Roma children; Roma communities in north-eastern Slovenia also benefitted from summer activities. General supplies and medicines as well as health care, transportation and personal assistance services were given also in rural areas.

## Spain

The soup kitchens of the Spanish Association – two in Madrid, a third in Seville - care for approximately a thousand beneficiaries a day, from Monday to Saturday every week. Special meals are offered at Christmas and Easter.

In Madrid, Valencia, Cordoba and in the Canary Islands the homeless are offered breakfasts during the weekend. In Barcelona, volunteers help in a local parish soup kitchen. Donations of food, clothes and hygiene items are regularly collected throughout the country.

The Social Centre which was opened in 2017 close to the San Juan Bautista soup kitchen in Madrid offers clothing, legal advice, psychological support, laundry and shower services to homeless guests each Sunday and Wednesday.

Many Delegations of the Order organise activi-

ties for disabled children and adults, including gardening, farming and seaside excursions. Most Delegations are also involved in accompanying the elderly and attending at nursing homes. The Association runs the Residencia San Juan Bautista in Madrid, which houses 84 elderly people and offers 24-hour medical assistance.

In addition to the hostel for pilgrims in the heart of the Camino de Santiago, in the town of Villalcázar de Sirga (for 30 pilgrims), in 2019 the Association launched the 'WoW Project' (Way on Wheels). The project, managed by volunteers, was designed so that the physical and mentally disabled could take part in the pilgrimage to Compostela, with wheelchairs specifically constructed for sand paths.

During the pandemic the Association promptly adapted its projects to the changing situation: soup kitchens stopped indoor service and started handing out food parcels, with up to 400 food parcels distributed in both Seville and Madrid, seven days a week.

In Seville the shutdown of public fountains led to bottled water being distributed to the homeless and the poor. Their pantry project - the weekly distribution of food - moved to a daily basis.

In Madrid, the Spanish Association was assigned hostels, with an initial number of 350

people. The medical centre worked nonstop via videocalls, and restarted receiving patients very cautiously.

Night rounds were resumed after the summer of 2020.

It was interesting to note that many new volunteers were enrolled during the worst times of the pandemic.

All projects for elderly or disabled people were suspended from the beginning of the pandemic. For the residents of care homes and the institutions for disabled people, video calls and virtual gatherings replaced in-person contacts.

Most of the international projects had to be suspended, except for the camp in Lebanon in November 2020. In collaboration with the Order's Special Envoy for the new forms of exclusion, three pilot projects were launched to help vulnerable groups overcome the digital divide, especially for seniors with no internet experience and to alert the younger population of its dangers as easy targets for abuse.

## Switzerland

The Hospitaller Service of the Order of Malta in Switzerland (SHOMS), operates with more than 900 volunteers. In 2020, in response to the Covid-19 restrictions, it largely reoriented its activities towards food distribution to an increasing number of economically needy people throughout Switzerland, in cooperation with local partners, including the Johanniter Orden. Volunteers have stayed in touch with the sick, the disabled and the elderly they assist, through letters, email messages and phone calls.

A babysitting service for the children of employees in health care organisations and hospitals was also provided.

In Lausanne, the 'Point d'Eau' service provides medical and dental care for the homeless.

In Fribourg, a taxi service is offered for oncological patients and through the 'Point d'Ancre' migrant families benefit from computer equipment for home schooling. Through its 'Cavaliers de Malte' programme the Order takes care of disabled children suffering from mental handicap and autism.

The 'Aid et Assistance Foundation' is an independent non-profit organisation of the Swiss Order of Malta. Its core activity is the collection of hospital material which is distributed to hospitals and schools in countries in need. In 2020 'Aid et Assistance' packed and organised 31 relief shipments, including more than 430 electric hospital beds, medical equipment, hospital and school furniture and other relief goods. The Swiss Association continues to support the Holy Family Hospital in Bethlehem.

## Ukraine

The Order of Malta Relief Organisation (Maltyska Slushba Dopomohy – MSD), active since 1993, has regional branches in Ivano-Frankivsk, Berehovo and Kiev.

Donations of food, medicines and clothes were distributed in 2019 and 2020 benefitting orphanages, school and communities in need. The 'St Nicolas goes to the Children in Need' project, which supports over 4,000 children, including those with disabilities, orphans, the children of soldiers, children in educational and rehabilitation centres, ensured that all received their personalised Christmas gifts.

Both the Order's Embassy and the Relief Organ-

isation have been supporting Boarding School No.8, which is specialised in the care and teaching of children with serious handicaps, by providing financial contributions, overseeing the coordination of restoration works of the external playground, and giving donations of educational and rehabilitation equipment.

Educational programmes were organised for the Roma community. And approximately 2,300 students attended the first aid courses offered through the regional branches.

120 children were assisted in the physical rehabilitation centre with therapeutic massage, neuro feedback practices, speech therapy and motor processing.

500 people were helped in the east of Ukraine, along the contact line. Psycho-social support to people affected by the conflict in Ukraine was able to continue during the pandemic through the means of a hotline.

Emergency response was offered after the flooding in the Prykarpattia region: 130 properties were cleared of mud and water; 30,000 litres of drinking water were distributed; four pumps for cleaning were purchased and donated to the community; 500 families received help packages of basic food and hygiene items.

In response to the pandemic, in spite of the clo-

sure of the soup kitchens, 20,000 meals were home delivered together with hygiene kits during the lockdown period.

In Ivano-Frankivsk medical disposables and equipment were donated to the Infectious Diseases Hospital and to the Central City Clinical Hospital n. 1.

## Vatican

The First Aid Post in St Peter's Square, Vatican City, is maintained by the Grand Magistry of the Order and staffed by 86 volunteers (49 rescuers, 21 doctors and 16 nurses) throughout the year.

In 2019 the service ran every day and provided 400 treatments. First aid services were also carried out at the Papal Basilicas of San Paolo Fuori le Mura and San Giovanni in Laterano.

In 2020 the First Aid Post was open daily until the lockdown in March, and treated 58 patients. From May to October 2020 the volunteers were engaged in the termoscan service at the entrance to St Peter's Basilica and in the vaccination campaign for about 400 Vatican employees.

Since 1st November 2020 the First Aid Post has been able to open every day, once again.



# MIDDLE EAST

*The Order continues its work as a significant provider of socio-health services for the poor and the needy in the region, with a special focus on Lebanon. In the war-hit countries of Syria and Iraq the Order promotes social cohesion and peacebuilding through inter-religious dialogue and community integration activities. It also runs the Holy Family Hospital in Bethlehem, with specialised mother and baby care which is a medical centre of excellence in Palestine.*



## Iraq

Since 2014 Malteser International has had a permanent presence in Iraq, providing humanitarian assistance to people in the north fleeing from the Islamic State. The organisation has been working together with local partner organisations to provide medical care and psycho-social support for the traumatised population.

In October 2018, the 'Ninewa Return Programme'

started, focussing on the return of internally displaced persons to the Ninewa Plains in central Iraq. The programme adopted a unique, integrated and multi-sectoral approach in order to support the return of families, which involved providing sustainable and dignified shelter through the reconstruction of war-damaged houses, enhancing livelihoods and boosting economic development through cash grants and business development support, increasing access to quality education for returning

children via school rehabilitation and teacher training, and promoting social cohesion and peacebuilding through inter-religious dialogue and community integration activities.

In 2020, 12,611 homes were repaired or constructed, 1,886 people were trained in business, construction and agricultural techniques, 41,186 young people and adults were reached with socio-cultural activities to foster social cohesion, 5,262 school-age children were enrolled in schools supported by the programme.



## Jordan

By the end of 2019, the renovation works of the maternity and neonatal unit of the Italian Hospital of Karak (IHK) were completed, thanks to the Grand Priory of Rome's financial commitment. The IHK is run by Combonian Nuns, and the medical treatments are made as affordable and accessible as possible to serve the most disadvantaged communities in the area.

The Order of Malta's Embassy held a meeting with Brigadier General King Hussein Hospital, for the construction of a COVID Hospital in Ir-



bid with 200 beds. The Embassy finalised the purchase of a minivan as well as the purchase of a mobile clinic.

## Lebanon

The Association currently manages a network of approximately 30 healthcare and social welfare projects, providing about 200,000 medical, paramedical and social acts per year, including in general medicine, health education, physiotherapy and vaccination services, in addition to the special care for the elderly and the disabled. These services are provided by more than 300 professionals without charge or for a symbolic fee.

Healthcare services are provided by 10 Community Health Centres - registered within the primary healthcare programme of the Lebanese Ministry of Health. They are located in the remote villages of Kobayat, Khaldieh, Barqa, Kefraya, Roum, Siddikine, Yaroun, Rmeich, and in Zouk Mikael and Ain el Remmaneh.

Six mobile medical units strengthen the health network of the Association, in Akkar, north east Bekaa and the southern border (funded by the German Foreign Office with the support of Malteser International), in west Bekaa (funded by Fondation Pierre Fabre) and in Zghorta-Tripoli (funded by the CPVG Charitable Trust), in addition to a mobile medical unit in Jezzine (funded by the G&J Aziz Foundation). In total they provide 72,000 consultations a year to vulnerable Lebanese and Syrian refugees.

For the past three years (up until April 2021), the Lebanese Association, in partnership with the Maronite Diocese of Baalbek, has set up and run the centre 'Charité et Partage' in Deir Al Ahmar. The project, funded by the German Cooperation with the support of Malteser International, is designed to improve health care for refugees and hosting communities, by strengthening the health structures in the north east Bekaa region, with a catchment area of 28 surrounding villages. The centre

has emergency care facilities, a laboratory and X-ray unit, as well as a referral system to other hospitals for emergency cases.

The Association cares for about 1,200 elderly every year, providing monthly medical exams, visits and meals, through the three day care centres of Roum, Kefraya and Zouk. There are also five 'warm homes' in nearby villages which provide facilities where seniors can meet when they are not at the day care centres. Since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, the activity of the centres has been re-adapted to home visits.

The holiday camps for the disabled in Chabrouh and Kfardebian centres saw 971 guests in 2019. Some suffer from severe retardation such as autism, polyhandicap, Down syndrome and cerebral palsy. There have been 31 camps since their inception, with 1,241 volunteers' participation from 20 different nationalities (453 are Lebanese). Since March 2020, only a limited number of tailored camps could take place with all safety and security



measures required to adapt to the pandemic. The Caravan project, a joint project of the German and Lebanese Associations, where young volunteers spend 10 months in Lebanon at the service of the most vulnerable, saw a record number of 19 participants in 2019-2020 but had to stop abruptly in March 2020 due to the coronavirus. However, the project kick-started again for the 2020-2021 intake.

The Lebanese youth service carried out more than 80 activities in 2019, for the disabled and the elderly, as well as projects for underprivileged children, serving 600 people in need, with 2,500 volunteer actions, thanks to more than 200 supporting donors. In 2020 and 2021, the on-the-ground activities decreased due to the pandemic but never stopped. Following the Beirut blast in August 2020, more than 200 volunteers were mobilised.

In order to strengthen its outreach to the most vulnerable communities in a country of 18 religious denominations, the Lebanese Association runs joint socio-medical operations with Dar El Fatwa (the highest Sunnite authority),

the Imam El Sadr Foundation (Shiite NGO) and the Sheikh Abou Hassan Aref Halawi Foundation (NGO in the Druze community).

In addition, protocols of cooperation have been signed with the Lebanese Army and with the General Directorate of General Security Beirut Explosion to aid the population in these multiple crises.

In order to respond better to growing poverty and to tackle food insecurity, the Lebanese Association launched an agro-humanitarian project in October 2020, in eight of its community health centres. By April 2021, the project had supported around 1,335 small farmers, offering five million seedlings of various winter and summer crops, in addition to technical assistance and capacity building. Five percent of the production is redistributed by the farmers to vulnerable families supported by the Order. The project is continuously growing and will reach a greater number of small farmers with the support of additional donors.

The Lebanese Association is currently implementing a four-year programme to strength-

en its infrastructures and capacities in order to better respond to the multiple crises that seem deemed to last for many years to come.

## Palestine

The Holy Family Hospital delivers approximately 70 percent of all Bethlehem infants, maintaining a survival rate of nearly 100 percent: 4,270 babies were delivered in 2020. It is the only hospital in the region medically equipped to deliver babies born before 32 weeks. Holy Family Hospital is often asked to accept the Bethlehem region's most challenging medical cases. As a result, approximately nine percent of all newborns delivered at the Hospital require hospitalisation in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) which is equipped with 18 incubators.

The Obstetrics and Gynaecology Department of the Hospital has a 45-bed capacity. The state-of-the-art labour ward is equipped with seven delivery rooms, a two-bed recovery/ICU and an emergency caesarean section operating room. The department has also

two other elective surgery operating rooms. The Hospital also offers post-menopausal gynaecological check-ups, cancer screening, surgeries and paramedical services, including a fully equipped laboratory and a blood bank, a pharmacy and a radiology department. Thanks to the outreach clinics, medical and social care can be brought to mothers and women who live in rural villages and scattered communities and are unable to travel to the hospital. The outpatient departments are well equipped with ultrasound scanning and full laboratory back up. More than 36,000 patients attend consultations each year. Since 2010 the Holy Family Hospital has been running a diabetic clinic dedicated to the screening of gestational diabetes. American and European specialists have confirmed that the Hospital operates in line with excellent Western European standards. As the second largest employer in Bethlehem, the Hospital also plays a crucial stabilising role in the community, providing jobs to over 174 Palestinian families and creating employment opportunities for women in an area where few opportunities exist.

The 'Olive Oil Project' was launched in 2015 by the Order's Embassy, on the property of the Monastery of St John of Jerusalem at Tantur, where olive trees are natives, and grow naturally, without chemical supports, and are cultivated with traditional methods. The project is still providing work and sustenance to many people in need.

## Syria

Along with partner organisations on the ground, Malteser International operates and supports five hospitals and eight primary healthcare centres in the Aleppo and Idlib regions. In addition to distributing relief supplies such as blankets, mattresses and hygiene articles, it is ensuring that there is an adequate water supply, and sanitation and hygiene inside the camps for displaced persons, which also means taking care of proper waste management and building latrines. In 2020 the primary healthcare centres carried out 348,120 patient consultations and 285,338 medical acts were carried out in the five hospitals. 17 health facilities were supported for Covid-19 preparedness

and response and more than 450,000 people were reached through awareness campaigns describing Covid-19 preventive measures. 304 water points were established, and 36 latrine blocks were constructed. 130,000 internally displaced persons received hygiene kits and Covid-19 preventive hygiene materials.

Malteser International's recent project for health and WASH components includes a pilot model that focuses on (re-)utilisation of grey water and rainwater for gardening in IDP camps, at homes, in schools and at community sites.

The Order of Malta's Hungarian Charity Service participated in the Hungarian government's repatriation programme, through which 200 Syrian families living in refugee camps could return to their homes in the city of Homs.

The Hungarian Association and the Charity Service financed the reconstruction of a Catholic hospital in Aleppo, which offers 15 emergency beds and a new wing with specialised departments in gynaecology, dentistry, laboratory and otorhinolaryngology.

## Turkey

Malteser International provides humanitarian aid for refugees from Syria in Gaziantep and Kilis. The focus of its work in Turkey is on the needs of people with disabilities, the integration of Syrian refugees into the Turkish labour market, strengthening civil society, providing psycho-social support and promoting social cohesion.

In Gaziantep, Malteser International supports its local partner organisation, the Independent Doctors Association, with the operation of a physiotherapy centre to help Syrian refugees deal with the trauma of their war experiences. In 2020 a further goal was the empowerment of Syrian women in a community centre run by the municipality of Kilis and the Maram Foundation. It offers a range of services, including language courses, vocational training and psycho-social assistance. The centre also offers space for joint activities between Syrian and Turkish women who live in the same community.

Since 2019, **Lebanon** has been undergoing multiple crises, in particular, the Beirut Harbour explosion of August 4th 2020. A large-scale transitional aid programme, the '**Lebanon Lighthouse Project**', funded by the German Ministry for Cooperation and Development with Malteser International was launched in September 2020.

It aims to strengthen the resilience of the most vulnerable communities in Lebanon. The project helps to close existing support gaps in the current acute crisis, to strengthen the national health system and improve the availability of and access to basic food.

With the support and solidarity of its donors and partners the Lebanese Association, in its mobile medical units deployed in Beirut in the first two weeks following the blast, was able to treat thousands of victims affected by it; homes were cleaned and refurbished; food relief and hygiene kits were provided; affected families were sheltered in its Chabrouh centre. The programme offered psycho-social support, physiotherapy, mental health and home care services. Five damaged primary healthcare centres were rebuilt, including its Ain el Remmaneh Centre; a church was refurbished, laptops were offered to a damaged school; there was support for the largest psychiatric hospital in Beirut, plus support for 19 women-led SMEs, in addition to continuously responding to the Covid19 pandemic.

# ORDER OF MALTA ORGANISATIONS WORLDWIDE

For contact details see [www.orderofmalta.int/contact](http://www.orderofmalta.int/contact)

## International bodies

Campagne Internationale  
de l'Ordre de Malte contre  
la lèpre (CIOMAL)  
Global Fund for Forgotten  
People  
Malteser International

## Afghanistan

Diplomatic Mission

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