

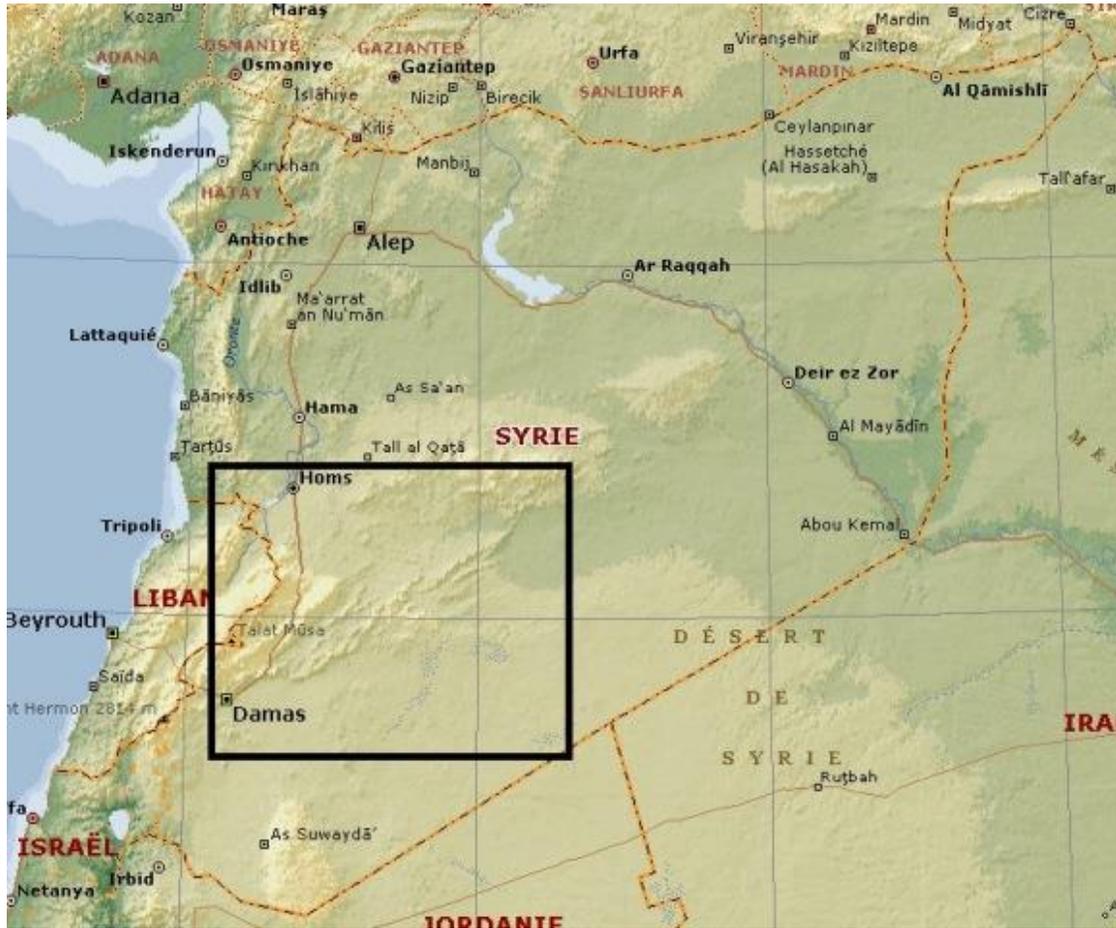
Aid given by the Humanitarian Assistance Team of Mother Agnes in Damascus and its suburbs, 2014

Mother Agnes Mariam of the Cross, Superior of the St James Monastery in Qara, Syria, founded the “Humanitarian Assistance Team” in 2012 to bring material help to the victims of the Syrian war. The people in this team are Christian and Muslim volunteers in and around Damascus who seek out to help those who are in the greatest need regardless of religious affiliation. Syrians generally don’t like to talk about their poverty or misery, so these hidden victims can be hard to find. But once some of the poorest and most deserving victims are found – the Humanitarian Team distributes to them food boxes, health care boxes, blankets, mattresses, medicine, clothes, toys for children, and at times monetary assistance for surgery or medical therapy. In addition to this work in Damascus the team also visits the towns that have just been liberated by the army but are badly in need of humanitarian aid. This is the photo report of their work so far in 2014.

OFF TO WORK

Zacky and Sylvie live in Damascus. Together with their whole family and other volunteers they dispatch the humanitarian aid all over the greater Damascus area. All together they have distributed 11 550 food and health care boxes in 2014 in Damascus, Homs, Dar’aa, and the Damascus suburbs. Their deliveries are always accompanied by the big poster with the name of the Humanitarian Assistance Team of Mother Fadia Laham (the Arabic name of Mother Agnes-Mariam.) They insist on giving her all the credit.





This is roughly the area the Humanitarian Assistance Team covers

DISPATCHING FROM DAMASCUS



This is Zacky shaking the hand of the Representative of the Syrian Social Affairs. Here Zacky brings him a truck of food and health care boxes for Aadra, in the outskirts of Damascus.



Here we see the Mayor of Maadamiyye (Damascus) and his staff. The Humanitarian Assistance Team gave them a pick-up truck full of food and health care boxes, milk and chocolate. The people of Maadamiyye have suffered a lot. Since the end of 2013, thanks to the aid of Mother Agnes Mariam, the siege was broken and rebels left the city. A lot of its houses are destroyed and nearly every house has been broken into.



The team here sends food and health care boxes, milk and chocolate to the city of Dar'aa (at the border with Jordan).



During the spring of 2014 the team helped the families of Ma'alula (a historically Christian town where they still speak Aramaic – although the town has become a ghost town since the terrorists left a couple of months ago) on numerous occasions. They gave them 2.5 tons of soup, clothes, food and health care boxes, mattresses, radiators en blankets.



The team gave 470 food and health care boxes, milk and clothes to the Abbasyeen district in Damascus. They were able to help about 100 families here.



Here the team hands out clothes in Damascus. In 2014 the group was happy to give 15 cars of clothes to the poor.

DISPATCHING FROM QARA (MONASTERY OF MOTHER AGNES MARIAM – NORTH OF DAMASCUS)



These pictures from July 2014 show a van being filled with food supplies in the monastery for the city of Sehl close to Nebk (Damascus country side). There was fighting in that city but since it has been liberated the people are coming back. It's difficult because a lot of people find their houses destroyed or broken into. It makes it all the more hard because there is no work for the people.



Dispatching of food and health supplies in the city of Sehl (200 food and healthcare boxes)



Dispatching of food, health supplies and 600 blankets in the city of Jreijr (Damascus country side)



Dispatching of food and health supplies in the city of Ma'moura

In the pictures below you can see some of the help the team gave to the village of Qara. In November 2013 the army entered in this country town which has a very rich history (it used to have many churches and an episcopate in the Middle-Ages). For about a month and a half after the army entered the town remained virtually empty. Thanks to the help of the Humanitarian Assistance Team the people were able to come back to their homes. The team was able to help the people here by giving them 5250 food and health boxes, 17 000 blankets and 10 000 matrasses.



In the local St – Michael Church the food and healthcare boxes were dispatched to the villagers



Here you can see the villagers filling out the necessary forms after which they received food and health supplies.



The big church in the new building of the Monastery of St James in Qara was used as a stocking area for blankets (blue bags) and for food and health care boxes. A total of 17 000 blankets were dispatched from here to the villages of Qara, Jrejir and Yabroud.



The monastery also received trucks with aid for the poor from the Orthodox Churches in Russia

Here on the right side you can see the villagers helping to unload the Russian trucks.



When the local clinic of Qara was distributing shots for the children our team went to give them toys. After a short while a lot more people came to the clinic, they were of course more interested in the toys than in the shots.

THE PEOPLE'S STORIES

Our Team took pictures of these children with the clothes they gave them (Damascus). They belong to three families, 21 people, who together live in a small room (5m x 5m). Life is so difficult for them they sleep in turns because of the lack of space. The team gave them money, mattresses, blankets, food and milk.



These children are from Safita – close to Tartus (At the Mediterranean Sea). Their mother is over 50 and their father in his mid-sixties. He's sick and cannot work. They get their food and clothes from the neighbors. Our team helped them.



This mother lives with her 5 children on 3 mattresses in a two room flat in Damascus. Her husband is missing. She has two sick children. Her baby has cancer and another one has a severe bowel problem. The team gave them mattresses, food and health care boxes, clothes, milk and money to pay the rent for 4 months.



Her child that has cancer



This is a newborn child. The parents have no money to take care of her. The father is often away from house working, he cannot see his child except once per month. His wages are insufficient even to pay the rent. Before the war you could easily rent a two room flat for 7000 SP. Now it's minimum 15000 SP. Our team gave them clothes, food and health care boxes and diapers. The main problem for refugees coming from Syrian cities to Damascus is that they have to pay a very high rent only to live in poor conditions.

The following pictures are children from different families that live in the same situation as this newborn baby:





These Christian children from the catechism group, led by Rhadir, at the Zeitun Church (Greek Melkite Catholic Patriarchate) in Damascus received soccer balls from Mother Agnes Mariam through our team. They were thrilled.



This is a very poor Druze family. The father is lame, one of the children is handicapped. They have a medicine bill of roughly 30 000 SP/month. The mother works as a waitress in a polyclinic where she only earns 8 000 SP/month. She runs from aid centre to aid centre just to get food for her family. The team helped them

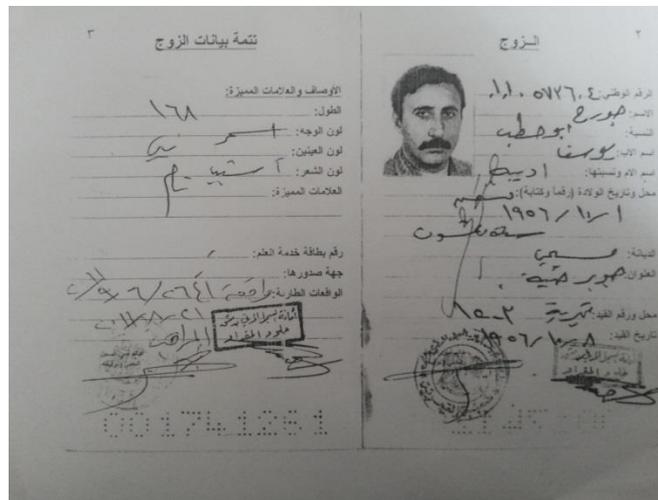


This family in Damascus has one child who is handicapped and one with a blood disease. Our team provided them with medicine, money and a wheelchair.





This girl fled with her family from Yabroud. She is currently very sick, hanging between life and death. She has had to have an operation on her abdomen. The parents gave everything for the girl and they don't have anything left. Every day the mother calls the team to ask them if they can help her. She needs a lot of medicine. With the necessary money, she will survive.



This man from Damascus died and left behind three children. They fled from Jowbar. His wife has no job – there is no work. She has to pay 13000 SP of rent/month. We helped them with food and health care boxes, clothes, blankets and mattresses.



Because of the bad economic situation due to the war the father of this child has no work and no money. His wife has a job but her income is too small to support the family or to pay the rent. On top of that she is sick. This woman doesn't want any help, but wants a job for her husband. We were happy to give them health care boxes, milk, diapers and clothes.

These are only a few of photos of the work of the Mother Agnes Mariam Humanitarian Assistance Team in 2014. There are hundreds of more families. Often they do not like to be photographed. We thank the Lord who gave Mother Agnes Mariam a heart like his own to organize this help for the Syrian people. All of us who are involved in her Team have been richly blessed through her. May God end this terrible and unjust attack on the Syrian people. Thanks to all the people and the organizations who send humanitarian aid to this country. May God bless you abundantly! Thank you for your help and your prayers – the Syrians are in great need of them.

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