



BI-ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

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EDITORIAL

by Msgr. Giorgio Bertin

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

There are moments in history when words feel insufficient, when the weight of what we witness surpasses our ability to give it adequate expression. We are living through such a moment.

The Middle East, in a particular way, continues to bleed.

Families displaced by violence, children growing up in the shadow of war, communities shattered by loss and uncertainty, these are not distant statistics. **They are our neighbors, our beneficiaries, our colleagues, and in many cases, our families and ourselves. The suffering is intimate. It reaches into our offices, our parishes, and our homes.**

Within this reality, I am moved deeply and constantly by the resilience I witness among the women and men of our Caritas family who continue to show up, every day, with compassion and purpose. In Lebanon, Jordan, the Holy Land, Syria, Yemen, Iran and other countries across the region, our teams carry the weight of this moment not as a burden alone, but as a calling. That is no small thing. That is, in fact, everything.

Yet I must also speak honestly: the needs before us are greater than our resources, and the road ahead is uncertain. War does not only destroy buildings, it erodes relationships, fractures hope, and silences the most vulnerable voices among us. **Our mission, now more than ever, is to ensure that those voices are heard, that no one is left to suffer unseen.**

Let us hold one another with hope in this season not only of hardship but also of Easter. Let us remember that our work is not merely institutional, it is profoundly human. Every act of care, however small it may seem, is a statement of faith in a future that is still worth building.

“ WE ARE ONE FAMILY AND “
TOGETHER WITH THE
RISEN LORD
WE WILL ENDURE

REGIONAL CONTEXT



92.6 Million
require humanitarian
assistance

The recent escalation in the Middle East, following the outbreak of war between Iran, the United States and Israel in February 2026, has placed additional pressure on an already fragile humanitarian situation in neighboring countries across the region.

Humanitarian needs remain extremely high due to ongoing and protracted crises, with an estimated **92.6 million people requiring assistance, including 44.8 million children**. At the same time, around **24.6 million people remain forcibly displaced**, including internally displaced persons, refugees, asylum seekers and returnees. This resulted in:

- **Heightened insecurity**
- **Economic pressures**
- **Operational challenges for humanitarian actors**

Iranian Red Crescent Society has mobilized its network of volunteers across the country



CARITAS MONA:



CONDUCTED, TO DATE, **TWO URGENT MEETINGS** (9 AND 31 MARCH)



PRODUCED **SEVERAL SITUATIONAL REPORTS** (SITREPS)



LAUNCHED THE **MONA RAPID ASSISTANCE PLATFORM** (RAP)



ENGAGED IN **REGIONAL ADVOCACY** PROMOTING THE RESPECT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF **INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW**

Caritas Lebanon supporting internally displaced Lebanese – March 2026



Women EMPOWERMENT

INITIATIVE

In a meaningful step toward gender equity, Caritas MONA and Fiftyfifty have successfully concluded the "**Empowering Female Leadership**" project, implemented across Lebanon and Jordan between October 2024 and March 2026.

The initiative aimed to **strengthen women's leadership within Caritas structures**, foster inclusive workplaces, and support female staff in reaching decision-making roles. It began by listening: surveys and focus group discussions in both countries allowed participants' needs and lived experiences to directly shape the training curriculum.



A session with women from Caritas Lebanon on 28 Jan 2026



A session with women from Caritas Jordan on 8 Dec 2025

RESULTS

The project included a 10-session program covering **leadership, emotional intelligence, communication, negotiation, career planning, and networking**. It was delivered through intensive three-day workshops held in Amman on 8 December 2025 and Beirut on 28 January 2026, bringing together 58 participants from across Caritas departments.

IMPACT

Pre- and post-training assessments confirmed strong impact: participants reported **greater confidence, sharper communication, and renewed professional motivation**. Many also formed new cross-sector connections, a quiet but significant shift toward a more collaborative organizational culture.

Capacity Strengthening Project

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The Regional Capacity Strengthening Project (CSP) continues to support member organizations (MOs) across the Middle East and North Africa in **strengthening their capacities to embody Caritas identity and mission, incorporate Catholic Social Teaching (CST), and foster Ecumenical and Interreligious Collaboration.**

Two webinars were held for group members to participate in the Ecumenical dialogue to advance their knowledge of Churches' diversity and ways to enhance collaboration.

The Jubilee of the Poor webinar further provided an opportunity to exchange experiences and share reflections on accompanying the Poor through a synodal approach aimed at improving their living conditions.



Synodal perspectives workshop Workshop for Caritas Syria Senior Team

WHAT'S NEW!

Two experts in Synodality convened **several online coordination meetings** with the three pilot MOs to better understand their contexts and needs regarding the capacity-strengthening component to design tailored workshops to maximize impact in implementing the synodal approach.

Consequently, an in-person workshop was organized **in Lebanon for Caritas Syria, from 13 to 15 February, and in Djibouti from 2 to 5 May 2026,** focusing on promoting synodal approach, Caritas principles and values within the organization.

WHAT'S AHEAD

The project advanced its capacity-strengthening efforts by developing a **facilitation guide in Arabic** through a designated consultant. This guide serves as a pedagogical resource across the region on Caritas identity, Catholic Social Teaching, Ecumenism, and Synodality, supporting the core group in delivering training to their staff and volunteers.

Additionally, to enhance communication and peer exchange, a **WhatsApp group** was created, enabling members to remain connected and informed, share updates, and engage in the exchange of reflections and ideas.

Working & Task Groups Forum in Rome

Caritas MONA, represented by its members, participated in the Working and Task Groups Forum held in Rome from 17 to 19, and from 24 to 26 February 2026.

The meetings fall under the **strategic objectives of the Communication and Fundraising Committee**, as well as the **Integral Human Development Committee**.

This active participation reflects the ongoing coordination between the national caritas, the regional secretariats and Caritas Internationalis, strengthening collaboration and enhancing the professionalism and impact of our shared mission.



VOCATIONAL TRAINING FOR REFUGEE INTEGRATION!

Caritas Cyprus, through its KIPOS (Garden in Greek) Enrichment Center, offers employability support alongside practical vocational training, in response to unemployment that keeps refugees on the margins of society.



In spring 2026, the program launched a **Culinary Skills course**, where participants trained in a professional kitchen under an experienced chef.

They learned **essential cooking techniques, food hygiene, teamwork, and basic Greek vocabulary to support workplace integration**. The course combined instruction with hands-on experience, culminating in preparing and serving meals for a community kitchen run by Mission Solidarity.

Beyond technical abilities, the training builds **confidence, collaboration, and adaptability**. Each participant also receives a basic kitchen starter kit to continue practicing independently.

This initiative equipped migrants with practical skills that support self-reliance wherever they go. It aligns with the wider vision of **promoting dignified work and sustainable livelihoods** as pathways to social and economic inclusion.

Through targeted, high-impact training initiatives, Caritas Cyprus is helping unlock potential, strengthen resilience, and create meaningful opportunities for migrants.



Participants learning essential cooking techniques, food preparation, hygiene, and teamwork under the guidance of an experienced chef

Caritas Djibouti

CHARITY WORKSHOP: KEYCHAINS & EARRINGS!

Since April 2025, Caritas Djibouti has been running a creative and meaningful initiative that brings together education, sustainability, and community support. Through a series of hands-on workshops, children learn to **craft keychains and earrings from recycled bottle caps**, turning everyday waste into something beautiful.

Held regularly in Caritas classrooms, the sessions have welcomed between 3 and 16 children at a time. Participants develop practical skills like cutting, assembling, and finishing each piece, while building creativity, confidence, and a sense of **environmental responsibility**.



*keychains and earrings made
from recycled plastic bottle caps*

*A machine that
recycles used bottle
caps collected from
the environment, and
transforms them into
useful items such as:
children's toys and
keychains*



By February 2026, the children had produced over 200 keychains and nearly 80 pairs of earrings, sold across a wide range of venues: Caritas itself, the Japanese and French military bases, Catholic and Protestant churches, the French Institute, Villa Camille, the JICA office, and even a church in Japan. The proceeds have already been put to good use, **funding repairs such as new locks for restrooms and classrooms, and the renovation of the wall near the basketball court.**

This project is doubly rewarding: it provides meaningful financial support for Caritas while giving children an enriching, hands-on experience that **connects them to their community**. Looking ahead, the workshops will continue, with plans to expand sales locations and channel future proceeds toward further renovations.

Caritas Mauritania

SEEDS OF OPPORTUNITY IN NOUAKCHOTT!

Caritas Mauritania continues to support vulnerable communities in Nouakchott, with a strong focus on the **socioeconomic integration of young people and women**. At the Center for Training and Professional Integration (CFIP), trainees benefited from hands-on programs in renewable energy, sewing, metal and aluminum fabrication, combining theory with practical experience.

Beneficiaries in the Aluminium Fabrication Shop



Women learning metal and aluminium fabrication in the renewable energy room

Learners demonstrated encouraging progress, **acquiring market-relevant skills such as installing basic solar systems, producing garments and accessories, and fabricating metal structures**. Regular assessments confirmed these improvements, despite some challenges including attendance gaps and limited materials.

The Center also advanced its outreach by launching **new training programs in building electrical work, hairdressing, and pastry making**. Out of 133 applicants, 75 trainees were selected where many of them were women, highlighting strong community interest. While the hairdressing course faced a slight delay due to trainer availability, preparations are underway.

Efforts to connect trainees with employment opportunities have also progressed, with new partnerships established for internships in local businesses. Looking ahead, initiatives to create youth and parent associations aim to **strengthen community engagement and support long-term integration into the workforce**.

Caritas Syria

CARE TOUCHES HEARTS AND ATTENTION ENSURES WELLBEING!



On 10 November 2025, as part of Caritas Syria's ongoing efforts to provide comprehensive support and care for **the elderly and to affirm that humanitarian assistance** extends beyond the Center's boundaries to reach those in their homes, the Community Center team in Jableh conducted follow-up visits to a number of elderly beneficiaries.

These visits were carried out in the presence of a **specialist physician** to assess their health conditions, ensuring their safety and the continuity of necessary medical follow-up. The project is implemented under the PSS program funded by CRS.

Caritas Iran

A STORY OF ENDURANCE

Since the regional conflict, the communication with Caritas Iran team was very challenging due to the limited access to the internet; however, Caritas MONA was able to reach them multiple times, ensuring their safety and security.

The humanitarian situation in Iran is catastrophic, according to the Government of Iran, approximately **3.2 million people (around 800,000 households) have been internally relocated**, one of the largest internal movements in the country in recent decades. Inflation, **income losses, and reduced purchasing power** continue to constrain household access to food and essential services, disproportionately

affecting women, children, persons with disabilities, refugees, and people with chronic health conditions.

Following the escalations, Caritas Iran has immediately responded by distributing food parcels and bottled water to the most in need. However, the operations were constrained by severe funding shortages.

Caritas Iran is currently preparing an Emergency Appeal (EA) to be launched in the upcoming days, focusing on continuing the distribution of food parcels and water, in addition to hygiene kits, targeting the most vulnerable Iranians and Afghan refugees.