



## **Covid19 is presenting unprecedented challenges to the world's most vulnerable population.**

During this frightful pandemic, the plight of Syrians has all but disappeared from the headlines. Yet, their suffering and hardship has increased manifold.

Refugees who live in crowded camps, with inadequate medical facilities, no ability to socially distance, no protective equipment, are in danger of dying in droves. For the helpless victims of violence, hunger and trauma who are internally displaced, they face this crisis in a country where the medical infrastructure has been destroyed and with little access to clean water and basic hygiene. Without a safety net, becoming infected can be tantamount to a death sentence.

As hard as this pandemic is on wealthy countries, displaced Syrians, living in precarious circumstances, have a much greater challenge and no functioning state to care for them. This is not a time for indifference.

More than half the Syrian population has been displaced by the ongoing civil war. This initiative seeks to urgently provide PPE (protective personal equipment) to as many as we can reach. The objective, simply put, is to save lives and lessen suffering in the biggest humanitarian tragedy of our time.

## **Humanitarian Relief Efforts for COVID-19**

6.6 million Syrians are “internally displaced” within their own country. Approximately 560,000 people are living in Internally Displaced Persons Camps. Throughout the region, healthcare remains under tremendous pressure. Even more live as “urban refugees” living outside of the camp system. Maintaining social distancing in extreme conditions of crowdedness is close to impossible. Providing disinfection when regular sanitation is a luxury is a daunting task.

To address this urgent need, MFA is constituting an emergency COVID19 fund. The goal is to raise \$250,000 to provide the following life-saving equipment:

PPE for Syrians in refugee and IDP camps;  
Extensive testing for COVID19; and  
Hygiene kits, including hand sanitizer and soap.

MFA has an extensive network of contacts on the ground and can ensure that the supplies reach those that need it most.

**Virtually every Jew living today descends from refugees and displaced persons, so it behooves us to be sensitive to this humanitarian disaster.**

**Please contribute generously to this emergency fund. The need is enormous and the time is now!**

**How can I help? [You can make a tax-deductible donation the Multifaith Alliance for Syrian Refugees, a project of the Tides Center.](#)**

**JFN will be happy to serve as a fiscal sponsor and transfer funds to the MFA.**

[www.multifaithalliance.org](http://www.multifaithalliance.org)

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A Project of the Tides Center

## **Why the MFA?**

The Multifaith Alliance for Syrian Refugees, (“MFA”) is the nation's leading interfaith response to the Syrian refugee crisis. We engage 101 participating organizations, including synagogues, churches and mosques, faith-based groups of different religions, as well as secular national and community organizations. The Jewish Funders Network is one of our founding Partner Organizations.

MFA began as a program initiative of the JDC. We believe, in the spirit of Leviticus, that “No, we did not stand idly by in the face of the suffering of our neighbor”.

As part of our mission, MFA has delivered more than \$150 million in humanitarian aid to Syrian war victims including medicines, medical supplies and equipment, food, clothing and other critical supplies. Through our current efforts, MFA continues to meet their needs in response to COVID-19.

## **Operation Good Neighbor: Israelis and Syrians Working Together**

One of MFA’s proudest achievements was its efforts to help create Operation Good Neighbor. This was a collaboration of prominent Israelis and Syrians, created as a means to ship humanitarian aid directly into southwest, Syria via the Golan Heights. The goods were transshipped through Israel by the Israel Defense Forces to the Syrian border. There, Syrian NGOs met them to receive and distribute the aid to hard-to-access areas throughout the region.

Through the auspices of Operation Good Neighbor, MFA helped implement other impactful projects. A maternity hospital in a suburb of Quneitra was established and furnished with beds, x-ray and ultrasound machines, along with medical supplies to support services at the facility. In just the first 10 days of the hospital's operation, obstetricians delivered 35 newborns. MFA shipments of medicine and medical supplies also supported women's reproductive healthcare throughout the region.

In addition to helping rebuild a functional healthcare system in southwest Syria, MFA and its partners worked to open a new baking facility in Quneitra. The wheat-to-bread market in southern Syria had been disrupted since the beginning of the conflict in 2011. The shortages of flour and bread continued for years with gaps in every step of the supply line. However, with the group’s support, the baking facility was constructed from the ground up, the machinery and equipment were purchased in cooperation with MFA’s partners, and flour was also supplied and shipped and donated by the Mormon Church. Within five months, the bakery became operational. Upon its opening, the bakery began producing 15,000 loaves of pita bread a day, serving 40,000 people.

These efforts helped to stabilize southwest Syria thereby keeping extremists from taking hold in the region and improving Israel’s security. Because of the bridges of trust that were built between Israelis and Syrians, hearts and minds were changed on both sides. While the channel was closed during the summer of 2018 as the Assad Regime took over the region, we are hopeful that the channel will one day reopen. To this day, Israelis and Syrians continue to meet in Europe to explore how they might continue to work together in Northern Syria through innovative, high-tech Israeli solutions to humanitarian needs.

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