



GAZA-PALESTINE, 17 JULY 2014

## **SUPPORT THE INHABITANTS OF GAZA DEFEND THE POLICY OF DIALOGUE AND PEACE**

### **A SMALL SUM CAN BECOME CONCRETE AID**

While an agreement is being sought to stop the bombing of Gaza and launching of missiles into Israel, the humanitarian organizations present in Gaza have set up camps for the injured and for families who have lost their homes. If before the outbreak of hostilities life in the Gaza Strip was difficult, now it has become unbearable.

Enclosed in an open-air prison, the inhabitants of Gaza have in just a few days seen a large part of the structures destroyed that had worked with young people, with families and also with the elderly and disabled. Structures which in recent years had provided a glimmer of hope and had aided numerous families to believe in the possibility of a better future for their children. Religious and secular realities that were seeking to teach that through dialogue a solution could be found.

In Gaza City, Association pro Terra Sancta has for years supported the Christian community in a project to benefit children under twelve and adolescents with various types of disabilities; it has also supported school activities and organized summer camps in collaboration with the parish priest Father Jorge Hernandez. He has written a letter of appeal, the full text of which follows below.

*A number of days have already passed since the beginning of the operation "Protective Edge" aimed at the Gaza Strip. The noise of aircraft and ambulance sirens have already become part of daily life. Yesterday I noticed an increase in the aerial, land and sea bombardment. And also the persistence of rockets launched from here. We have learned of the call for the inhabitants of the areas of Beit Hanoun and Beit Lahia to immediately evacuate their homes. And we ask ourselves: where can these people go? Gaza is very small, everything is nearby. Is there is neutral place, a peaceful and secure refuge for the people of Gaza?*

*So, where to go? The typical routine of war here has already been internalized by the population: airplanes, explosions, destruction and death. People had predicted, for some time, a possible military attack that would go on for a long time. These were predictions of folk wisdom. But what has confounded these predictions is the appearance of a well-prepared resistance on a far larger scale than had been seen before, on the part of the local authorities.*

*That Hamas rockets have reached Tel Aviv and Jerusalem is no trivial matter. There is also a well-founded fear of a reaction within the Strip against the Christians. This would not be surprising, considering the modus operandi already observed in other places. For this reason it is encouraging to observe the peaceful spirit of our people. This is not the first time. And it will not be the last. I entrust myself entirely to the hands of God. How long we must endure, only God knows. For the moment we are well, safe and calm. We ask for prayers to end this madness.*

Association pro Terra Sancta is supporting this appeal.

Do not abandon these people. Supporting the inhabitants of this strip of land facing the Mediterranean Sea means not losing hope that a just solution to the conflict can be reached through negotiations.

Every contribution is absolutely critical.

**EVEN A VERY SMALL AMOUNT CAN ENABLE US TO PROVIDE FOOD, MEDICINE AND CLOTHING TO THE PEOPLE**

How to do this:

-ONLINE on the site **[www.proterrasancta.org](http://www.proterrasancta.org)**

-via BANK TRANSFER: ATS – IBAN: IT67 W050 18121010 0000 0122691

BIC/Swift Code: CCRTIT2T84A. Reference: Gaza

### **WHAT ASSOCIATION PRO TERRA SANCTA IS DOING IN GAZA**

In Palestine, and in Gaza in particular, no state assistance whatsoever is provided to families with disabled children. In the predominant traditional mentality, disability is viewed as a sign of divine punishment. The project of the Association (the nonprofit NGO of the Custody of the Holy Land) in Gaza is focusing principally on this sector. In addition to supporting centers for the disabled operated by the nuns and fathers, it is financing the purchase of medicines and medical equipment. It also contributes to an education campaign in the Gaza schools, in collaboration with Palestinian and Italian universities specializing in special education.

The President of Association pro Terra Sancta is the Custos of the Holy Land, fra Pierbattista Pizzaballa.

### **LIFE IN GAZA**

At the moment the Strip (about 40 kilometers long and 10 wide) has approximately 1.8 million Palestinian Arab inhabitants, of whom more than half are minors. More than two-thirds of the population live in eight refugee camps and consist of refugees forced to abandon their homes following the 1948 and 1967 wars. The very high population density and the difficulties caused by the recent conflict, by the embargo imposed by the State of Israel for security reasons, and by the continued tensions have converted the Gaza Strip into one of the most problematic areas in all of the Middle East. The majority of the inhabitants survive on less than two dollars per day and nearly 80 percent depend on humanitarian aid from international organizations and NGOs.

For further information: **[www.proterrasancta.org](http://www.proterrasancta.org)**

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