



CNEWA Canada *a papal agency for humanitarian and pastoral support*
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CNEWA Canada launches Middle East Christians Campaign

Called “Christians Can’t Survive Without You”, campaign reflects a growing plea to help Christians remain in their homeland

Ottawa, Ont., May 16, 2018 – Catholic Near East Welfare Association Canada (CNEWA Canada) launches today a year-long campaign to raise awareness on the struggle of Christians living in the Middle East and to raise funds to support the many works of the local churches.

CNEWA’s “Christians Can’t Survive Without You” campaign includes direct mail appeals, e-marketing and other digital channels as well as advertisements and parish-based initiatives across the country. In its campaign, CNEWA Canada invites people to be as generous as possible. The funds raised will go toward groups and local church partners in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan, Palestine and Israel.

“Factually speaking, we’ve seen a devastating decline in the Christian population in the Middle East in the past 15 years. It’s a real tragedy,” says Carl Héту, CNEWA’s national director in Canada. “The reasons are many and vary by country, but the extreme violence of the past eight years, particularly in Iraq and Syria, has exacerbated the exodus of Christians. We simply cannot accept a Middle East without these communities, which have lived in these lands for over 2,000 years and have an important social role — especially as peacemakers.”

Research conducted in recent years by CNEWA confirms that more than 2.5 million Middle East Christians have been forced out of their homes over the past 15 years due to conflicts, economic hardship, and on many occasions, discrimination and persecution.

In many cases, Catholic social service initiatives are the main providers of education, health care and other necessary services – **to all people, regardless of religion, social status or ethnicity.**

“We in the West are one body in Christ united with Christians in the Middle East. Their struggles are our struggles and it is our responsibility to help our brothers and sisters there to keep our faith alive,” says Archbishop Prendergast, president of CNEWA Canada’s board. “An attack on them is an attack on the values Christians promote worldwide. To lose Christianity in the region would be a devastating loss and certainly a potential harbinger of what’s to come in other areas of the world.”

From 2014 to 2017, CNEWA worldwide contributed to just over \$47 million in emergency, humanitarian and pastoral projects to the Middle East. To learn more and receive further information on how and where these funds were allocated, [click here](#) for CNEWA's report on the Middle East.

Those who would like to make a donation can visit cnewa.ca Middle East page or write a cheque payable to CNEWA Canada and marked "Middle East Campaign" at 1247 Kilborn Place, Ottawa, Ontario, K1H 6K9 or call 1-866-322-4441. As a registered charity, CNEWA will issue a tax receipt.

For additional details on CNEWA's work in the Middle East and insights into trends in the region, visit cnewa.org/mideast.

About CNEWA

Founded by Pope Pius XI in 1926, CNEWA accompanies the historic Eastern Catholic churches as they respond to the Gospel in service to their families, communities and neighbours. For nearly a century, thanks to its donors, CNEWA has supported the work and lives of Catholic communities in the Middle East, Northeast Africa, India and Eastern Europe —offering financial support and loving solidarity in their work with and for all. Established in Canada in 2005, CNEWA Canada raised some \$4 million in 2017, 60 per cent of which was directed to projects and programs in the Middle East.

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