



CC/NOA/Orhan Erkilic

Survivors—left homeless by the massive earthquake—gather in a shelter in Gaziantep, Turkey.

More Calls To Lift Sanctions Against Syria

by EIR Staff

Feb. 10—A number of prominent voices around the world have spoken out, condemning the continuation of the sanctions policy against Syria.

The Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) issued a statement, from their emergency meeting convened Feb. 6, “We urge the immediate lifting of sanctions on Syria and allowing access to all materials, so sanctions may not turn into a crime against humanity.” Further, they “called on the international community and the international Ecumenical family to provide urgent emergency aid to the region, in coordination with the Middle East Council of Churches, the Churches, and their affiliated institutions.” The MECC, founded in 1974, is headquartered in Beirut, Lebanon, and includes the Eastern Orthodox Churches, the Oriental Orthodox Churches, the Evangelical Churches, and the Catholic Churches of the region.

The MECC [statement](#) reported that, “despite their limited resources as a result of the blockade, all the Churches in the Middle East have put their resources at the disposal of the affected and displaced people due to the earthquake, since the first moments of the disaster.” The Churches “will spare no effort in doing all they can to relieve their pain and lead them towards prosperity and progress.” The statement stressed that the Churches in the Middle East “always support their people.”

The Sant’ Egidio Community, an association of fraternal communities in many nations, issued a release Feb. 7, stating, “The ruinous earthquake that has destroyed an entire region on the Turkish-Syrian border is claiming thousands of victims, whose count continues to grow.” The war-torn country of Syria is said to suffer more because of “the international sanctions affecting

the country. We believe it is time to suspend the sanctions to allow relief to arrive copiously and as quickly as possible to help the people exhausted by war and earthquake.” The Sant’ Egidio Community, founded in 1968, is headquartered in Rome, and often used by the Vatican for informal diplomacy.

Italian Defense Minister Guido Crosetto tweeted out within two days of the earthquake, that human lives come before sanctions. “The earthquake hit two nations and both should be helped, with equal determination. Humanity in the face of tragedy does not stop at state borders, does not judge and must override everything, even sanctions.”

President of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent Society (SARC), Khaled Hboubati, condemned the sanctions and said on Feb. 7: “We demand the lifting of economic sanctions and the siege in order...to allow aid deliveries and humanitarian actions to be implemented by SARC and other bodies.” “These sanctions are against who?” he demanded to know. “Against the Syrian people?”

Cardinal Matteo Maria Zuppi, President of the Italian Bishops Conference, issued a call for “suspending or revoking” sanctions on Syria.

Mick Wallace, Member of the European Parliament (Ireland South), tweeted Feb. 7 that if the European Union really cared about the earthquake victims, “Could they show it by ending their illegal sanctions on Syria which have killed so many innocent people?”

China’s Foreign Ministry Spokesperson, Mao Ning, stated at the Feb. 8 Ministry press briefing, “In the wake of the catastrophe, the U.S. should put aside geopolitical obsessions and immediately lift the unilateral sanctions on Syria, to unlock the doors for humanitarian aid to Syria.”