

Dear friends and supporters,

In these dark times of the corona pandemic, which overshadows almost all countries in the world and seems to steer people's lives into a new direction, I have been asked how the situation in Syria is right now and what has become of the bakery project.

Like almost every country, Syria has meanwhile also been hit by the Corona crisis. So far, 19 cases have been diagnosed in Syria. Two people have died and three have been cured. Some media reports abroad have suggested that there are more cases which are allegedly covered up by the Syrian state. However, WHO experts working in Syria believe that these figures are realistic. Due to a lack of medical materials and personnel, there are difficulties in examining people throughout the country. The state only learns about an infection if the patient concerned reports the case. The state certainly has no interest in hiding cases of infection. On the contrary, on the part of the state there is the fear that the disease might spread the way this has been the case in neighboring countries, at a time when the health system in the whole country is still in a poor condition following the long years of war. There are still infrastructure problems, and water and electricity shortages are affecting people everywhere.

In order to prevent the spread of the virus throughout the country (precisely speaking in the areas controlled by the government), the state is taking rigorous measures that in turn lead to a further aggravation of the social situation. Everyone has to stay at home. On weekends there is a curfew from 12:00 noon to 6:00 in the morning. These restrictions mean that workers without firm employment conditions no longer have any income for themselves and their families. The state cannot provide financial support. The only thing the state can do right now is to bring bread to the households. Unfortunately, bread is scarce and you have to accept it in any condition, because each family receives only about 2 to 3 kg. Poverty is getting ever more awful and it is felt everywhere. Only the bread and the "grace of God" can save the poorest in Syria from hunger.

Against this background, the regional bakery under construction in Maaruneh seems to me like a wise providence of God. God looks upon the poor with mercy. Fortunately, the construction work has not been stopped. The work is progressing well despite the obstacles imposed by the Corona measures. The work of God cannot be impaired. The shell structure has meanwhile been finished. We are now doing everything to ensure that the building will be ready for the installation of the machines during the month of May. The machines will be ready for delivery at the end of April, but of course they first need to be paid.

At this point I would like to thank all the dear friends for their kind support and for their help in so many ways, be it through donations, by giving valuable advice or by spreading the call for help. All of this has contributed to persuading other people and aid organizations to support the bakery project. Not to forget all the volunteers, including those on site, who invest a lot of organisational time and effort so that the work is being carried on. I thank you for your prayers, which have certainly touched many hearts. The helpers are showing strong solidarity and a lot of compassion for the needy people in

Syria and are thus giving comfort and hope. I consider such people to be angels, messengers from God, who carry out God's plan of salvation in the midst of the crisis. Thankfully, there are quite a few of them.

I regard this project as a miracle because it is incredible how all the forces are joining together to bring the project to fruition. It has been wonderful to see that so-called lucky coincidences have again and again come up at exactly the right time to enable the project to be carried on step by step. God's grace is indeed great and His mercy is immeasurable.

Now we hope that this grace will enable us to buy the bakery equipment. With the strength of joint prayers we trust that we can succeed.

We still live in the grace period preceding Easter. The feast of Christ's Resurrection is coming soon. It will show that Christ is present in our troubled world and will defeat the power of evil. It will also give us new strength for a new life in joy, peace and justice.

I wish you all this new life in joy and peace during this dark corona crisis. I hope that everything will recover quickly and that perhaps a shared spirit for a lasting, positive rethinking will emerge from this.

Connected with you in prayer I am conveying my best wishes for Easter,

Your

Fr. Hanna Ghoneim

P.S.: For donations in Germany, please use the bank connection of mission München, IBAN: DE96 7509 0300 0800 0800 04, BIC: GENODEF1M05, payment purpose: 58159 Ghoneim

Account in Austria: Korbgemeinschaft-Hilfe für Syrien, IBAN: AT94 2011 1828 5755 6000, BIC: GIBAATWWXXX













