



## STIFTUNG KORBGEMEINSCHAFT HILFE FÜR SYRIEN

Dear friends and supporters,

What is happening in Syria is very painful. As a devout Christian one cannot just stand by and watch things happen. One must draw attention to the suffering of the people. The day before the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, everyone in Syria woke up to the shocking and catastrophic news: Energy prices had just skyrocketed by 40% – all of a sudden, without any warning. As a result, all fares and transportation costs have risen overnight by 50%. Numerous drivers have blocked roads and highways by setting tires on fire as a sign of protest because they no longer have any customers. This also made it very difficult for many students to get to universities and colleges. They all missed their classes. Worst of all, many shopkeepers kept their stores locked, claiming that goods would become more expensive the next day. A rampant inflation is expected take place once again. The price hike comes at a time when people have already been desperately hoping for better times. For many people, this shatters any remaining hopes. The population feels betrayed from all sides. The big question everyone is asking with great concern is: “What is going to happen next?” No one knows! The government is trying to paint a rosier picture of the situation on social media and is asking for patience. But in the meantime, the level of anger and sarcasm has enormously increased among many YouTubers and influencers. All of this makes the future look grim.

The growing distrust among citizens toward the government is evident. People can no longer wait. Although salaries have been raised, government employees do not receive their pay regularly at the beginning of the month, but at various times later on. Furthermore, the purchasing power of the new banknotes introduced in January of this year is steadily declining. The promised prosperity is increasingly proving to be nothing but a mirage.

One of the main reasons is the growing corruption among the ranks of the new leadership. The lavish lifestyles of some of those in power (not just a few of them) cast doubts on the goals of the so-called “revolution.” This corruption, together with an unstable security situation and the still prevailing lack of laws, of a functioning judicial system and of many other services, has deterred many investors. In short, it can be said that, unfortunately, the situation is not improving, and the outlook is, regrettably, not as rosy as hoped for.

Despite everything, however, I remain optimistic about the situation. This optimism certainly does not stem from the country’s politics or economy, but from the power of God in times of need. As a clergyman, I perceive this power and, together with a few others who believe in God’s power, I try to demonstrate it through our actions. Many stores and bakeries have closed their doors due to rising energy prices, but we have kept our charity markets and our bakery open. We also have refrained from raising our prices. For us, this crisis means greater dedication and even more commitment to the poor, who are suffering immensely from political and economic hardships.

This time of crisis helps us recognize God's mercy more clearly. The Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross that we celebrated the day before yesterday, teaches us to rise up in the face of adversities and to act in accordance with God's will. Today, people in need require our help more than ever to get back onto their feet. They are eager to work. But how can they find work when investors – along with their capital – are leaving the country? Some friends in Syria have said to me "May God protect us from famine! If things continue this way, we in Syria may face such a severe famine that the hungry ones may rise up and spark a revolution."

Whenever I hear statements of this type, my desire to further expand the social market project gets stronger and stronger. We have named these social markets "Charity Markets." For it is only through charity that we can restore a home country where survival is possible. This love, which Jesus demonstrated to us on the cross – comprising self-sacrifice, selflessness, and steadfastness in the face of all adversities – can rescue us from this misery.

Through faith in God's great and powerful love, miracles become possible thanks to the dedication of many compassionate people.

Linked with you in this hope,

Your Fr. Hanna Ghoneim

Vienna, September 16, 2026

