

A Summary of Activities of the Order Of Malta Associations, its Entities and Malteser International Worldwide



In the Western Hemisphere we are implementing a series of changes in the way we work to protect our staff and beneficiaries, while keeping our commitment of bringing health and dignity to the most in-need.

In the United States, we would like to help churches continue to be a welcoming place where our fellow Christians can go into their journey of reflection. We are distributing hand sanitizers to local parishes.

In Colombia, we have intensified our health and hygiene education activities, targeting migrants and refugees as well as local communities in the country's La Guajira department. Health personnel have also received extensive training on protective measures for COVID-19. Additionally, we provided medical examinations for refugees and migrants at the Integrated Assistance Center (CAI) in Maicao, and are supporting UNHCR and the Colombian Ministry of Health in the elaboration of medical protocols for triage and treatment to prepare and strengthen local health systems. We are also using various information channels to share key messages on hygiene and COVID-19 prevention (e.g. training youth volunteers).

Malteser International Americas is the health provider for UNHCR in the camps and settlements in La Guajira. We have been asked by UNHCR, PHAO and the Colombian Health Authorities to be focal point for the pandemic response now elaborating protocols, coordinating response activities and support entry screening in two departments serving host communities, migrants, Venezuelan refugees and indigenous populations.

In Peru, we have made adjustments to our project for the elderly, with house calls replacing group activities for the time being. The senior citizens receive information on preventive measures to avoid infection with COVID-19 during the house calls. They are also provided with hygiene articles including soap.

In Haiti, we are distributing flyers on COVID-19, hand-washing and disinfecting surfaces. We introduce simple and effective hygiene solutions. We are reaching out to the elderly population with particular care and attention.

With its centuries-old hospitaller tradition, the Sovereign Order of Malta is actively participating in the management of the Covid-19 pandemic, both through forms of cooperation with national health services and civil protection corps and with health and social assistance centers. Below are some of the initiatives of associations and relief and volunteer corps in various countries.

EUROPE

Italy

In Lombardy, one of the hardest-hit regions, the Order of Malta's Italian Relief Corps (CISOM) has deployed its volunteers to help set up a new hospital, built in record time in the Milan Fair pavilions. With 200 intensive and subintensive care beds, it will be an essential medical unit for treating the most serious cases. Order of Malta Italy will donate 260 ventilators to the new hospital.

From today, Order of Malta volunteers are assisting Covid-19 patients, and those who have recovered but need further treatment, in the hospital ship the Liguria Region has set up in the port of Genoa, able to accept up to 400 patients.

The intervention of the Order of Malta's members and volunteers in Italy is mainly in the health, psychological and logistic sectors, with the distribution of food and medicines to the elderly or those in isolation. The health-screening services continue for passengers arriving in the main Italian airports, an activity launched by CISOM at the start of the coronavirus emergency. Support is also offered to municipal operations centres in ten different regions. Some of the Order's social initiatives that continue to give daily assistance to the homeless, the elderly in need, the unemployed, immigrants and those living in extreme poverty, are still up and running.

Germany

In Germany, the Order of Malta has opened a central and various regional crisis management centres, where task forces specialized in health emergencies are managing and monitoring all the assistance services provided, ensuring they respect the protocols issued by the respective health authorities.

Medical teams are operating on several fronts, in Baden Württemberg, two drive-through stations test people sent by their doctor without having to leave their cars. There are also numerous mobile clinics for consultations, as well as pre-hospital triage services. Ambulance services have been intensified. The eleven hospitals run by the Order have partially been equipped to face the healthcare crisis, one of which is now specialised in respiratory diseases. Finally, the Order of Malta's volunteers are providing various new services such as shopping for elderly citizens and visiting by telephone.

France

Order of Malta France emergency teams have been working with the prefectures and hospitals since the beginning of the crisis. As requested by the authorities, they intervene in various sectors, such as assisting the sick and transporting them to hospitals, supporting call centres giving advice on health issues and delivering supplies to hospitals. Medical protocols have been activated for guaranteeing the safety of patients and staff in the various facilities for the disabled and elderly run by the Order of Malta in France.

Hungary

The Order of Malta's Relief Corps in Hungary (MMSZ) has activated a service to deliver food and basic necessities to the guests of its 30 institutes for the elderly or sick, now in complete isolation. Thanks to its online platform, it has also activated educational services for students – mostly young people from disadvantaged families – in the twelve institutes the Order runs in the country. Since freezing temperatures are forecast for the coming days, MMSZ will temporarily re-open its overnight shelters with 100 beds for the homeless, again in total respect of medical assistance and healthcare provisions.

Ireland

In various towns, the Order of Malta's ambulance corps has set up an emergency hotline for those in isolation needing food and/or medicines and offers support to those in need.

Slovakia

In Slovakia, the Order of Malta is attempting to maintain its activities for the homeless and continues to distribute food and hot drinks.

MIDDLE EAST

Attention remains high in the Middle East, where for now there are few Covid-19 cases recorded. However, the precarious medical and social conditions in many countries has prompted the Order of Malta to activate a series of monitoring services.

Palestine

In Bethlehem, the Order of Malta's Holy Family Hospital – the only facility in the region with a neonatal intensive care unit – remains open to take care of the most vulnerable mothers and infants in the region. Since 5th March, when the area was declared a red zone, some 150 babies have been born. The infection-control measures have been intensified in line with the Palestinian Ministry of Health protocols and one of the operating theatres has been turned into an isolation ward for infected patients. The lockdown of the region has however caused further difficulty in moving premature babies or those needing surgery.

Lebanon

The Order of Malta's association in Lebanon has launched a series of initiatives for containing the virus in some of the poorest areas of the country. Since the outset of the health emergency, the association's medical staff have been conducting awareness and educational campaigns in all the outlying regions where the Order of Malta has health centers and mobile clinics. In addition, all the nurses in the Order's facilities in Lebanon have received specific Covid-19 training offered by the public Health Ministry.

ASIA

South Korea

In one of the first countries to tackle the health emergency, members of the Order of Malta's delegation in South Korea have prepared and distributed thousands of basic kits – including masks and alcohol detergents – to disadvantaged families in the cities of Seoul and Suwon. Some 2000 people have been the beneficiaries of these kits.

Pakistan

The Order of Malta's international relief agency, Malteser International, has intensified its hygiene information campaigns and established public hand-washing facilities.

Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, kits have been prepared to help contain the spread of the virus in cooperation with local partners.

Engaged in various emergencies worldwide, Malteser International has intensified some of its programs in the areas at risk and at the same time ensuring its medical and social assistance activities are continuing in the areas caught up in wars and violence. "With over 60 years of experience in managing crises, including epidemics, we are tackling the coronavirus emergency with the utmost seriousness and professionalism," declared Malteser International's Secretary General Ingo Radtke. Hence the programs providing healthcare, food, drinking water and the distribution of medical materials continued to be an absolute priority. Our partner organization Gonoshasthaya Kendra received approval from the Bangladesh Government to develop locally designed testing kits for coronavirus.

AMERICAS

United States

In Hartford, capital of Connecticut, the Malta House of Care mobile medical clinic, in cooperation with the Saint Francis Hospital, has set up a drive-through for coronavirus testing near a busy circular driveway, right in front of the hospital. The patients sent by their doctor to use this facility will receive a result within 24 hours

Haiti

In the poorest country in the American continent, Malteser International is distributing flyers on Covid-19 containing hygiene indications and is offering assistance to the elderly.

Colombia

Malteser International has intensified its health and hygiene education activities aimed at migrants and refugees as well as host communities in La Guajira department. Health personnel have also received extensive training on protective measures for COVID-19. In addition to scaling up mobile medical missions to remote and border areas, Malteser International has distributed hygiene articles to people in need.

Peru Adjustments have been made to Malteser International's project for the elderly, with house calls replacing group activities, providing information on preventive measures to avoid infection with COVID-19. Hygiene materials are also handed out.

OCEANIA

Australia

The members of the Australian association are preparing food parcels that also contain hygiene articles such as soap and antibacterial gel. They are also offering assistance to the elderly in isolation and the homeless.