



ORDRE SOUVERAIN MILITAIRE ET HOSPITALIER  
DE SAINT-JEAN DE JERUSALEM DE RHODES ET DE MALTE

MISSION PERMANENTE D'OBSERVATION AUPRES DE L'OFFICE DES NATIONS UNIES  
ET DES AUTRES ORGANISATIONS INTERNATIONALES A GENEVE

# Sovereign Military Order of Malta

## International Organization for Migration

### 101<sup>st</sup> Session of the Council

#### General Debate

Statement by:

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Deputy Permanent Observer

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Mr. Chairman,  
Director-General,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,

My Delegation, on behalf of the Sovereign Order of Malta, joins preceding speakers in congratulating you, Mr. Chairman, and the members of the Bureau on your election. I would also like to seize this opportunity to pay tribute to Ambassador Christian Strohal for his remarkable Chairmanship.

We would like to welcome the new State Members (Myanmar and St Vincent and Grenadines) and Observers (WFP, World Vision and ABDGN).

Allow me to salute the **excellent cooperation** established by the Order of Malta with the IOM. We would like to express our appreciation for the excellent spirit of the rich exchanges of this 101th Session of the IOM Council and for the open and sincere engagement of all stakeholders in these deliberations. On this regard, we would also like to applaud the exemplary partnership between the IOM and the HCR. The Order of Malta supports **IOM's leading role in the global dialogue**, and acknowledges its **increased responsibilities** within the international humanitarian system.

As we know, the conception of the traditional "Nation State" inherited from the Westphalia Treaty has dramatically evolved throughout the past centuries, leaving us with the necessary task to adjust and redefine our notions of frontiers and barriers in such an interconnected world. We now live, as Ambassador Swing eloquently said in his excellent report, in an unprecedented era of large-scale human mobility in which the phenomenon of migration is more dynamic and complex than ever. Our Order, created over 900 years ago, conducts programs through our 13,500 Knights and Dames who are members of the Sovereign Order as well as through more than 25,000 employees and 80,000 permanent trained volunteers. Hence, alongside our health and protection assistance for crisis-affected and impoverished populations, we also provide the most vulnerable communities several tools and instruments to overcome the problems they face on a daily basis, primarily by supporting them with long-term initiatives, such as sustainable reconstruction, community stabilization, and rehabilitation programs.

Strongly engaged in similar areas as IOM and most of humanitarian actors, we find ourselves working together in "forgotten" corners of the world, with the very same objectives: preventing disease, fighting poverty, and rebuilding victims' lives through emergency relief, thus sharing with your Organization the aims to preserve human dignity and promote human rights with an impartial and neutral approach. **Assistance to migrants**, in the face of extreme poverty, armed conflict or natural disaster, is a **major segment of the Order of Malta's ongoing activities**, as it strives to provide urgently needed aid to mixed flows, migrants, IDPs and refugees, and to



deliver medical and humanitarian assistance to those in need, regardless of their political background, status, or religious affiliation. Nevertheless, despite our common efforts to alleviate suffering and provide support for the displaced and uprooted people struggling for their lives, we are fully aware that the challenges we encounter, as a humanitarian community, still remain considerable. The year 2012 is no exception, with, for example, refugees and IDPs in and from Syria, refugees and IDPs in Myanmar and the ravages of hurricane Sandy in an already devastated Haiti, with more than 350,000 displaced Haitians still living in camps since the events of 2010.

Mr. Chairman, allow me to discuss briefly on some emergency areas of operation in which IOM and the Order are actively engaged, with putting emphasis on the support we provide to IDPs, refugees, uprooted people, and stranded migrants in mixed flows.

The Order of Malta continues its historical mission of presence and operation in the **Mediterranean Sea** through the Italian Navy and Coast Guards. Relief teams with the cooperation of the Order's Italian Emergency Corps, have been providing first aid to thousands of **North African** migrants, particularly people fleeing from Libya and Tunisia. Surge in immigrants landing on the island of Lampedusa along the Italian coastline have created an important humanitarian situation. In order to prevent hypothermia, dehydration, malnutrition, and injuries, emergency aid has been provided.

The Order of Malta's worldwide relief agency, *Malteser International*, has been implementing projects for 16 years in the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, notably in terms of emergency medical aid, agriculture, and psychological/medical assistance to victims of sexual assaults. In January 2012, the ongoing presence of armed rebels groups in the Shabunda province in **South Kivu** put thousands of people and families in exodus, as they tried to escape persecution and oppression. Needless to say that the DR Congo still continues to face a serious humanitarian crisis due to the instability of its political situation, and thousands of IDPs are facing not only food shortages, but are also suffering from the numerous consequences of malnutrition. Malteser International, with the cooperation of the World Food Programme, has managed to distribute food supplies to 37,500 IDPs, mostly families with malnourished children. With the determination of reinforcing the capacity of local communities and ensuring stability and food security in South Kivu, we remain active by facilitating and promoting access to the region's health amenities and by supporting measures for the rehabilitation of agriculture and water sanitation.

In northern **Burkina Faso**, the influx of more than 65,000 Malian refugees fleeing from the civil war has intensified an already critical food shortage, leaving both refugees and locals in a precarious and extremely vulnerable situation. In the aftermath of the Malian political crisis, *Ordre de Malte France*, along with *Malteser*



*International*, provided ambulance services for the sick and the wounded, mobilized their human resources such as paramedics and trained officers, delivered tents and medical equipment in the camps, and made available their logistic resources. In addition to the medical aid that we are still administering, two ambulances have been added to ensure our immediate support to those in need. Our main focus in the region still remains first aid and the 24 hours a day access to transportation services, for both locals and refugees.

Last year, the **Horn of Africa** has found itself at the epicenter of one of the worst humanitarian crisis of the region, experiencing a shattering drought, a major water and food crisis, thus leading to famine and other dramatic consequences for nomadic communities and the local population. In the hopes of preventing recurring droughts and severe hunger problems, the Order of Malta has launched on August 1<sup>st</sup> a long-term initiative that will help more than 15,000 semi-nomads living near Illeret, close to the **Ethiopian** border. The project focuses on water supply and hygiene awareness, and will, for a period of three years, prepare the population for future catastrophes and provide them the necessary expertise and tools to improve and maintain their water sources.

The Order of Malta also assists the victims of famine in **northern Kenya**, mostly by delivering emergency relief through food and medication aid to more than 73,000 people. Our organization has been active in Kenya for ten years, and keeps assisting the health care units of the region and supporting them with medical supplies and medicines. We also granted mosquito nets for 3,000 families and offered trainings in how to avoid malnutrition for nearly 480 mothers and health workers.

As the intensity of the **Syrian** crisis reaches paroxysmal dimensions, the Order of Malta is continuing and expanding its support to IDPs and refugees. Recent outbreaks of violence and military tensions in the past few weeks have generated an influx of more than 9,000 Syrians in **Turkey**, and thus have led to severe logistic problems in already overcrowded camps, in which over 120,000 refugees are now registered. With winter approaching, displaced Syrians find themselves running out of resources, with the necessity of fulfilling their fundamental needs. Our relief service for humanitarian aid will therefore provide heating stoves for 500 families and warm clothing for 1,000 children in the cities of Homs and Hama. Critical aid and sanitary essentials will be given to more than 15,000 people in Aleppo, Damascus, Hama and Homs. Besides, winter relief will be provided to 8,000 people in two Turkish provinces where Syrian refugees have fled, and with the generous financial support of Germany's Federal Foreign Office, *Malteser International's* local partners will also be able to distribute thousands of winter clothing, blankets, and winter relief packages to refugees throughout the provinces of Kilis and Hatay.

On the same note, the *Lebanese Association of the Order of Malta* is still providing health services and operating a socio-medical center in **Lebanon** in which Syrian



refugees can receive free medical treatments. So far, 600 refugees have benefited from this initiative and since the beginning of the month, we started to give emergency relief kits and winter clothes. Approximately 500 people will receive one.

The Order of Malta's relief agency for humanitarian aid has been providing, in the past few months, life-saving household items, hygiene kits and medical and psycho-social support to thousands of displaced families in **Myanmar**. The Order of Malta, active since 2001 in Myanmar, will provide 1,500 displaced families with medical assistance and emergency kits, and local staff members belonging to various ethnic groups will be in charge of distributing them.

With more than 800,000 people affected by heavy floods in the eastern part of **Philippines** earlier this year, thousands of victims had to be displaced. *The Order of Malta Philippines* have provided food kits and relief goods for 2,000 evacuated people, and still continues to offer trainings in emergency relief management and in disaster risk reduction, as the region is repetitively afflicted by natural disasters.

Like OIM, the Order is deeply concerned about the magnitude of the current humanitarian situation in **Haiti**. Since the earthquake of 2010, we remain fully active in assisting the victims, as our support is still significant in areas such as health and nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene, reconstruction and social programmes. The recent damages and heavy floodings resulting from Hurricane Sandy in the Haitian region have led to at least 52 deaths, more than 20,000 displaced persons, and our local partners have also been strongly affected by the storm. In order to improve the livelihood of the IDPs, emergency relief measures in terms of shelter, health care and nutrition are being administered, as well as hygiene education campaigns and distribution of seeds.

In the **USA**, the Order of Malta has provided medical and legal assistance to migrants in Florida.

Since April 1<sup>st</sup> 2012, the Order of Malta is also giving particular attention to the development of community-based health insurance system for exiled **Tibetans** in **India**. By doing so, more than 23,000 Tibetans refugees excluded from the Indian social security system will then benefit from medical coverage, and training will be given to hundreds of representatives of the Tibetan administration. The main goal is to empower the Tibetan exile community and to reduce the poverty risks associated with illness.

We also wish to mention the termination of a 2-year project for displaced families in northern **Sri Lanka**, in which 250 households were built, 170 wells were renovated, and 203 families have been trained in animal farming and improved agricultural methods.