



SOVEREIGN MILITARY HOSPITALLER ORDER
OF ST. JOHN OF JERUSALEM OF RHODES AND OF MALTA

PERMANENT OBSERVER MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE
AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN GENEVA

**International Organization for Migration - 111th Session of the
Council
General Debate
Statement by H.E. Ambassador Marie-Thérèse Pictet-Althann
Geneva, 24 - 27 November 2020**

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

This year's ***Covid-19 pandemic*** has had a tremendous impact on international humanitarian action. All stakeholders, including faith-based actors, have had to adjust to this global health crises by adapting their programs accordingly. Major challenges have to be overcome, particularly with regard to assisting migrants, refugees, IDPs, the homeless and old or disabled people.

The Sovereign Order of Malta scaled up and/or converted its projects to preventing and treating Covid patients. Its worldwide relief agency came out early with a Malteser International Global Coronavirus Response Plan. Its priorities are to sustain lifesaving humanitarian operations, particularly by supporting health and WASH systems and to help mitigate the harmful side effects on the most vulnerable populations.

During 2020, the flow of refugees and migrants arriving in ***Italy*** has intensified again. On 29 September, a new agreement between Italy and the Order of Malta for saving human life at sea was signed. It strengthens cooperation in the emergency medical and first-aid sector during search and rescue at sea. In ***France*** and ***Germany***, the Order of Malta is pursuing its longstanding programs for

migrants which offer assistance upon arrival and provide services needed for successful integration into the host-society.

In the context of ongoing violence and political instability in the **Middle East**, the Order of Malta is increasing its support to displaced populations. Additional medical aid is being offered and mobile clinics are in operation.

In **Colombia**, Malteser International is providing services to vulnerable refugees and migrants from Venezuela. In 2020 several thousand medical examinations and consultations were already conducted.

Malteser International's work in **Africa** focuses on strengthening local healthcare systems, and improving food security and water supplies in order to help protect public health. Providing support to some of the large numbers of displaced people fleeing the ongoing instability in the many affected countries is a challenge that cuts across national borders.

Mr. Chairman,

The Order of Malta's mission is to alleviate the suffering of people in great need. Providing emergency care for migrants and refugees is and will continue to be at the core of its worldwide humanitarian action.

Thank you.