

ACTIVITY REPORT 2019



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PRESIDENT'S WORD



Order and progress

SOS Chrétiens d'Orient continues its fuliginous rise for the benefit of the Eastern Christians. Once again this year, our teams have redoubled their efforts to keep up the rhythm of our progress in the mission countries and to be up to the legitimate demands of our community of supporters and friends.

Since 2013, 1700 volunteers have joined the missions to embody another image of France. An image scarred by the duties of history, but renovated by the formidable dynamism of a youth that does not give up in the face of the announced decline of the Christian presence in the Middle East.

Events such as the liberation of the town of Mhardeh from the Islamist yoke, so ignored by almost all the major Western media, are moments of intense satisfaction and honour for the work accomplished.

Projects, food aid, moral support, we have never abandoned this community of Christian resistance in the midst of the war in Syria.

We will always continue to prefer the complexity of witnessing to all geopolitical conformism. The Eastern Christians are constantly formulating this demand for truth. Our societies must be aware of the ordeal that ideological errors cause in a very concrete way to entire families condemned to suffer the assaults of barbarism.

It's with joy that Benjamin Blanchard presented the diversity of these actions to the supreme pontiff on 13 December this year. Between the low temperatures of Christmas days in Gyumri, Armenia, and the burning plains of Iraq our volunteers were present everywhere and all the time.

This is the hallmark of a rapidly expanding action which will never abandon its initial demand: to re-establish links between French, and now Italian, Christianity and Eastern Christians.

Charles de Meyer

ORGANIGRAM

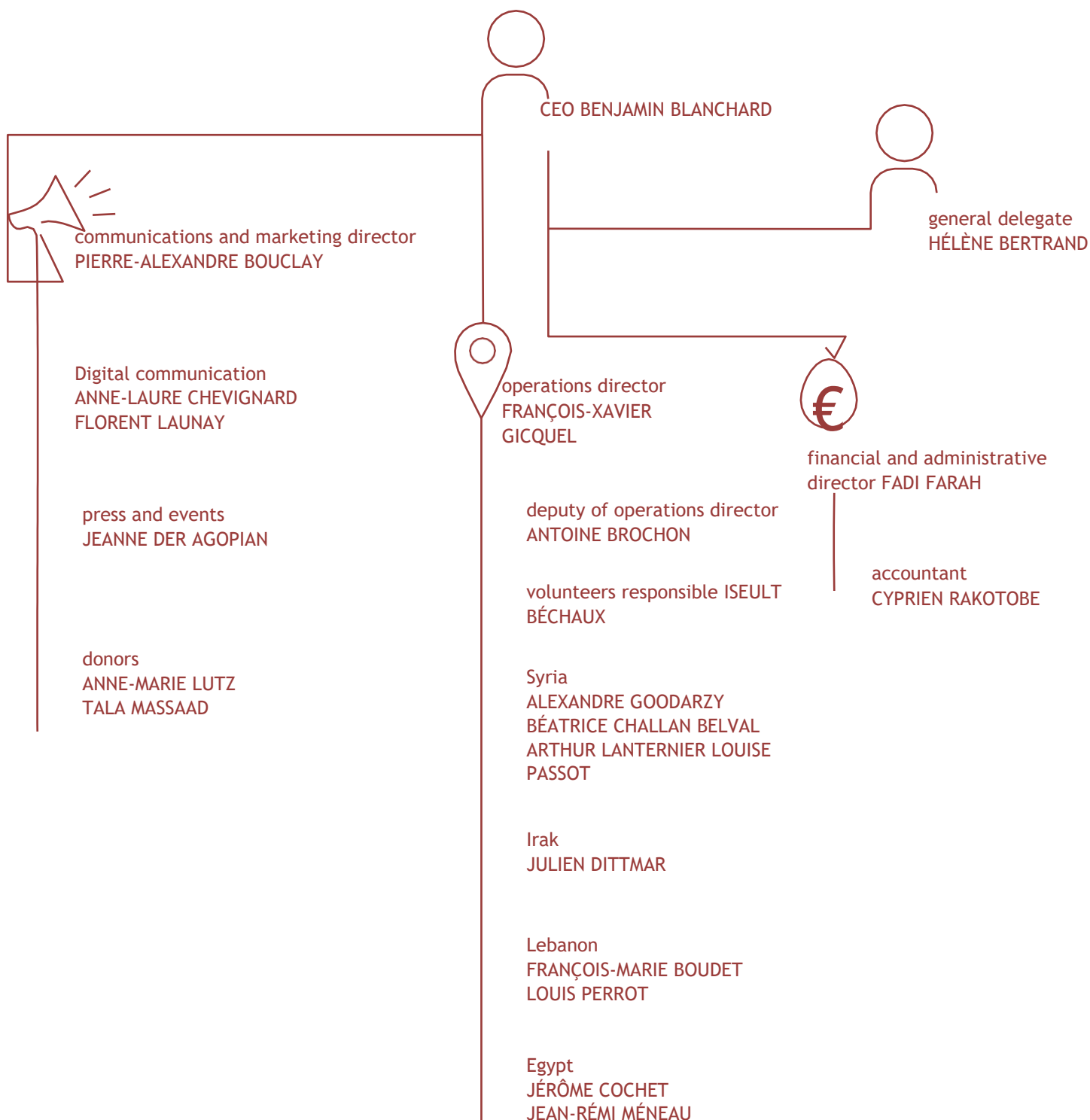
Treasurer
CÔME
DE VILLENEUVE

general secretary
ARTHUR
DU TERTRE

president
CHARLES
DE MEYER

member
ANNE-LISE
BLANCHARD

member
HARLOTTE
D'ORNELLAS



BUDGETS DISTRIBUTION

reconstruction
of patrimony
and

reconstruction of churches
and houses, financing
cultural and spiritual
activities

15%

medical

distribution of medicines
funding of medical caravans,
construction of renovation of
hospital facilities

28%

27%

food aid

and
hygiene

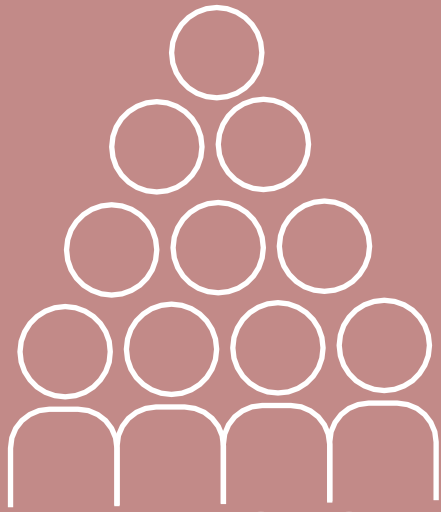
distribution of food,
Water, hygienic products,
emergency missions and
daily missions

30%

education

Educational support, help for
children, financing teachers,
supplies and patronage,
construction of schools...

Numbers



1 7 0 0

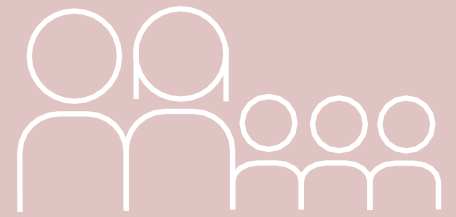
VOLUNTEERS SEND SINCE

2 0 1 3



60 TONS

OF MEDICAL EQUIPEMENTS OR
LOGISTICS DIRTIBUTED



20,000

FAMILLES ASSISTED REGURLALRY



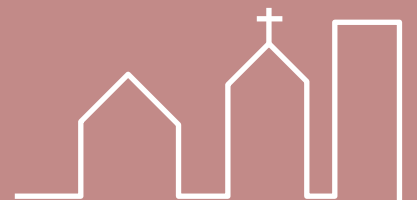
95 TONS

OF TOYS, CLOTHING, HYGIENE
AND FOOD PACKS DISTRIBUTED



6 MILLION

EUROS OF MEDECINES
DISTRIBUTED



574

STRUCTURES REBUILT OR
RENOVATED

OUR MAIN MISSIONS

The central objective of our organization is to enable Eastern Christians who so desire to remain in their ancestral lands. To achieve this goal, the organization pursues six main missions: emergency aid, medical care, economic and social development, education, youth, patrimonial and cultural development and finally the reconstruction.



Emergency aid

Security threats in the Middle East directly affect the most vulnerable. For years, Eastern Christians have been prey to persecution or humanitarian distress that directly threatens their physical integrity and their conditions of life. This is why, in times of crisis, SOS Chrétiens d'Orient acts by providing effective emergency relief. This means providing water and food, but also basic equipment, hygiene products, blankets, heating and, when necessary, housing.

The organisation sets up actions adapted to the context in order to best respond to the needs of the population in coordination with the relevant authorities and actors. The aim is to save lives, reduce suffering and ensure the safety of the population.



MEDICAL CARE

A situation of armed conflict or of war, leads inevitably to catastrophic health and human consequences for the population. This can result in the proliferation of epidemics as well as in a large number of civilian casualties due to bombing or shooting at the civilian population.

SOS Chrétiens d'Orient provides a medical care for sick people while increasing the resilience of displaced or refugee populations. The aim is also to strengthen the countries' capacity to intervene in health matters by developing support mechanisms at both national and local levels to help the populations as closely as possible. The organization also funds pharmacies, mobile infirmaries, medical practices and the purchase of health equipment. The organization also strengthens and rehabilitates existing infrastructures and health centres.



ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPPEMENT

SOS Chrétiens d'Orient enables Christian populations in the East to find work in areas where unemployment is very high. Thanks to solidarity loans with zero or negative interest rates, the selected candidates obtain financial aid to launch or relaunch their activity. The association also participates in the implementation of large-scale agricultural projects essential to the economic development of towns and villages (wells, vineyards, olive groves, orchards, etc.)

In terms of development aid, the organization's volunteers favour local businesses in order to give work back to the local population. This allows local actors to actively participate in the recovery of their own economy and will therefore be better able to tackle possible future crises. In addition, we only favour projects that are based on the capacities and means of local communities and authorities, in order to avoid any waste and to significantly reduce the beneficiaries' dependence on humanitarian aid.

SOS Chrétiens d'Orient focus on the socio-economic opportunities of vulnerable Christian communities to help them. With particular attention to local initiatives in order to encourage the emergence of a solid socio-economic body.



EDUCATION

With the aim of helping Christian populations to stay in their own land, SOS Chrétiens d'Orient is constantly taking care of more than 20,000 families or approximately 100,000 people. Protecting the most vulnerable from the violence of war and guaranteeing their future is just as important as meeting their basic needs. This is why our volunteers spend a lot of time with the youngest children to provide them real moral support. SOS Chrétiens d'Orient is particularly keen to provide a permanent support to Christian children in the Middle East to ensure both their protection and their development in the heart of countries that suffer the war. This is why, in areas where conditions allow, we rebuild or rehabilitate schools so that these children can continue their education.

We also support young displaced persons or victims of war by creating patronages, recreation centres, pitches and various educational activities to enable them to remain within a social and educational framework that they need.



CULTURAL AND PATRIMONIAL DEVELOPPEMENT

SOS Chrétiens d'Orient commits to multiplying and developing projects that promote the Christian identity and heritage of the Middle East in order to ensure that the Christian populations remain rooted in their land. We achieve to this goal by the provision of sustainable humanitarian aid through rehabilitation, reconstruction and rooting actions to enable populations to rebuild on their own territory. Our volunteers work on the ground to revaluation historical sites and maintain an active spiritual life through pilgrimages, prayer vigils, etc. The development of sustainable rootedness enables us to prevent future crises by analysing the causes of the population's vulnerability. Cultural and social rootedness prove that is a powerful factor of resilience.



SOS Chrétiens d'Orient is committed to providing Eastern Christians with healthy housing, which is an essential condition for leading a healthy and decent life. The organization is therefore present in the field with populations in post-war countries in order to help them rebuild their homes and their heritage. The main objective is to enable the Eastern Christians to return to their land and live in their cities devastated by war. This involves the reconstruction of houses, churches, schools, hospitals, etc. After an audit, the organization finances equipment and workforce and provides a list of suppliers and engineers to carry out the reconstruction projects in direct partnership with the beneficiaries.

THEY SUPPORT US

SOS Chrétiens d'Orient has gained many supporters and partners, both in France and abroad, thanks to the efficiency of the intervention method in the core of the disaster areas in the Middle East.

The association has the support and blessing of French religious figures such as Monseigneur Rey, Bishop of Fréjus-Toulon, Monseigneur Centène, Bishop of Vannes, and Monseigneur Aillet, Bishop of Bayonne and Oloron.

His Holiness Theodore II, Pope of the Coptic Orthodox, His Holiness Ignatius Ephrem II Karim, Patriarch of the Syriac Orthodox, His Beatitude Joseph I Absi, Patriarch of the Greek-Melkite Catholics, and His Excellency Chaldean Archbishop of Mossul.

SOS Chrétiens d'Orient is supported also by several personalities such as Valéry Giscard d'Estaing +, former president of the french republic, Jean d'Ormesson + from the Académie française, Max Gallo +, from the Académie française, Jean Tulard, from the Institut, General Bruno Dary, former Governor of Paris, Vianney, singer, Michael Lonsdale + and Mike Massy, actors, Joy-Astrid Poinot and Yves Camdeborde, Heads chefs

Valéry Giscard d'Estaing +
former President of the French Republic
Honorary President of SOS Chrétiens
d'Orient



Jean d'Ormesson +
From the Académie française



Vianney
Singer



Max Gallo +
From the Académie
française



Jean Tulard
from the Institut

Theodore II
Pope of Alexandria
Patriarch of All Africa
and of the See of St Mark of the Coptic
Orthodox



Gregory III Laham
Patriarch emeritus of Antioch
and of all the East, of Alexandria and
Jerusalem of the Greek Melkite Catholics



Denis Tillignac
Writer



Dominique Rey
bishop of Fréjus-
Toulon



General Benoît Puga
grand chancellor
from the Légion d'Honneur



Michael Lonsdale +
Actor and writer



Yves Camdeborde
Head chef

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2019

THE CAUSE OF THE CHRISTIANS OF THE EAST IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Our organization has actively and voluntarily supported the creation of an intergroup dedicated to Eastern Christians in the European Parliament. This group is the first one specifically dedicated to the defence of Eastern Christians within the European institutions. Chaired by the former minister Thierry Mariani surrounded by parliamentarians from other countries and political parties, it has itself visited Syria and Lebanon with SOS Chrétiens d'Orient on several occasions. This group has a real capacity to intervene, as it can work with different committees of the Parliament: Human Rights, Foreign Affairs...

ITALIAN AMBASSADORS CONFERENCE IN ROME

The “Fondazione SOS Cristiani d'Oriente” was able to attend a three-day conference in Rome, from 24 to 26 July 2019, where the entire Italian diplomatic body was gathered around the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The aim was to analyse and reflect on the role and challenges of Italy around the Mediterranean.

THE ROAD TO LEBANON

Three former volunteers of our organization wanted to show the historical, cultural and friendly links between the West and the East. To this end, thirty sailboats sailed on both sides of the Mediterranean between 16 June and 10 July 2019 for the benefit of Christians in the East. Jean-Marie Vidal and his team created the "Route du Liban" in 2019 to draw attention to the fate of Christians in the East. A mass celebrated in the church of Saint Victor in Marseilles preceded this crossing. On board the sailboats, the crew members all wore the bracelet with the organization's colours on their wrists. At the arrival, the volunteers of SOS Chrétiens d'Orient were present in the port of Jounieh to welcome the sailboats.



LIBERATION OF MHARDEH

Since 2012, the city of Mhardeh has been under repeated assault by Islamists. The Christians have taken up arms in order to remain free and continue to practice their faith. This small Syrian town overlooks the Orontes valley, only 3 km from the governorate of Idlib, to northwest of Hama. This city is therefore located both within range of the front line but also close to a gathering of tens of thousands of jihadists from Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, Jabhat Al-Nosra and the Free Syrian Army. But on Friday 23 August 2019, the front line was pushed back to twenty kilometres north of Mhardeh. The city is now out of reach of jihadist fire; the long awaited peace is back. The happy population invades the streets to celebrate the end of the bombing.

THE ANNUAL SOLEMN MASS OF SOS CHRETRIENS D'ORIENT

A solemn mass was pronounced on 12 September 2019 in the church of Saint-Eugène in Paris to celebrate the sixth anniversary of the organization. It brought together former volunteers, donors and collaborators of the organization. It was an opportunity to thanks for these six years of existence, the work accomplished and all that remains to be done.

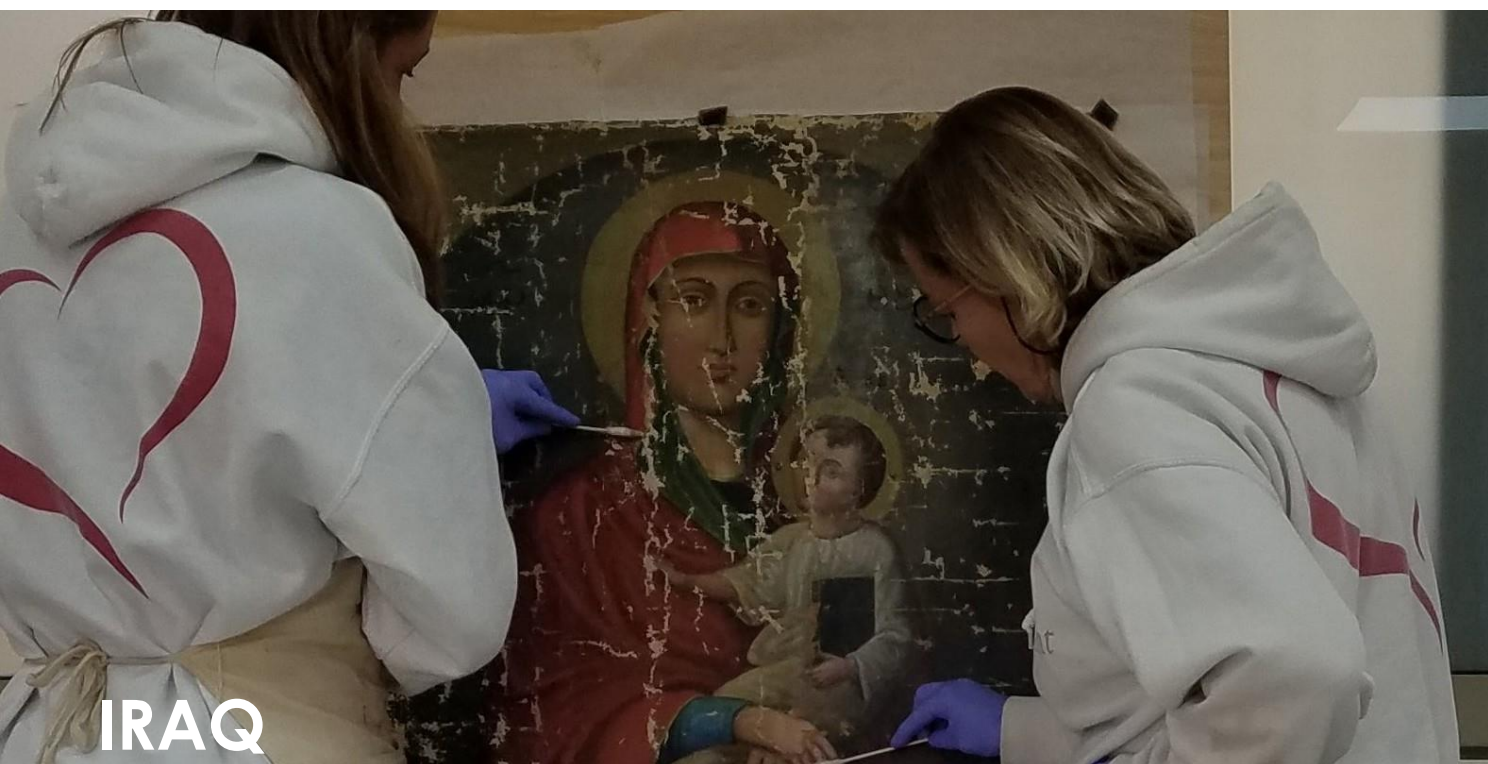
CHARITY DINNER AT THE HOTEL DES INVALIDES

Every year, our organization organise a charity dinner to raise funds for an important project, this year we chosen the Hôtel des Invalides on 27 September 2019. This year it was for the rehabilitation of the cities of Mhardeh and Sqelbiyeh that the two hundred most generous donors mobilised, under the high patronage of President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and His Excellency Mgr Nicolas Balbaaki, Metropolitan of Hama.

A HEARING AT THE VATICAN

On 13 December 2019, Pope Francis received in private audience at the Vatican the members of the International Forum of Catholic Non-Governmental Organisations. Our organization was represented there by Benjamin Blanchard, CEO and Sebastiano Caputo, President of SOS Cristiani d'Oriente, the italian foundation of SOSCO. This forum, created in 2007, is a tool for dialogue between the Holy See and Catholic NGOs.

SOS CHRÉTIENS D'ORIENT MOBILIZING



THE PRESERVATION OF A UNIQUE CULTURAL HERITAGE

SOS Chrétiens d'Orient has supported the initiative of Iraqi Dominican Father Michael Najeeb, now Chaldean Archbishop of Mosul, in the preservation of oriental manuscripts relating the history of Christianity in the region. The aim has been to protect thousands of manuscripts from destruction by digitising them. The need to protect Iraq's Christian cultural heritage became apparent in the 1990s. So the Iraqi Dominican father founded the Digital Centre for Oriental Manuscripts (DCOM). But this need became more urgent in 2014 with the advance of Daesh. The digitisation work increased until this heritage had to be evacuated urgently to Erbil to prevent it from extinction. In response to the emergency, we funded the addition of a floor to the CNMO. We are talking about digitising more than eight thousand scrolls, some of which date for over a thousand years old.

We also participated in the restoration of another element of the ancestral cultural heritage in the North of Iraqi Kurdistan: The Benatha chapel. The reconstruction work, which took place from autumn 2018 to the end of 2019, was financed by the organization up to 10,000 euros. The organization's volunteers helped strongly the inhabitants of the Christian village of Benatha to enable them to remain on their land and live their faith. Our organization is particularly concerned with the rootedness of the Christian populations on their land. This 18th century chapel has been the site of baptisms and marriages of several generations for the past three centuries. The preservation of such a heritage was essential for the Christians still living on their land. The Chaldean chapel in Benatha is now rebuilt and can once again welcome the inhabitants.

The preservation of the Chaldean cultural heritage and the need to keep cultural instruction alive has become a priority for Al Qosh. Although it was one of the few villages to escape the Jihadists invasion, many have fled as consequence to the Islamists advances in the region. We therefore supported Father Ghaouzan who wished to revive and consolidate the Chaldean heritage and culture in order to not losing their deep identity. SOS Chrétiens d'Orient has helped Father Ghaouzan in the realisation of his project for a library and community centre, thanks to the € 13,000 contributed by the organization's donors and the volunteers on mission.

SUPPORT FOR DISPLACED CHRISTIANS IN ERBIL

We mobilised to provide both food aid and hygiene packs to Christian families displaced in Erbil since the exactions committed by Daesh in their towns and villages. The volunteers have also committed to provide real moral support and a testimony of hope to these Christians displaced from their land. These unique moments are reflected in fraternal exchanges and real sharing. Volunteers are invited to join the family on a meal or to share a snack, and the visits usually end by a collective prayer. These unique moments allow these Christian refugees to feel that the Christians of France have not forgotten them.

THE RENOVATION OF THE CHALDEAN CATHEDRAL OF VIRGIN MARY IN AKRA

At the end of 2018, our organization met with Bishop Najeeb, newly elected Chaldean Archbishop of Mosul and Akra, and with the head of mission in Iraq to discuss the renovation of the Chaldean Cathedral of Virgin Mary in the city of Aqra, a cathedral that had been abandoned and in ruins since 1986. The building was looted when the Christians fled the revolts between Iraqi Kurdistan and Baghdad. We have launched the start of renovation work in April 2019, to help preserve the Chaldean heritage of the region. Volunteers are helping to remove away rubble, clean walls, and restore the cathedral to its former glory.



ARMENIA

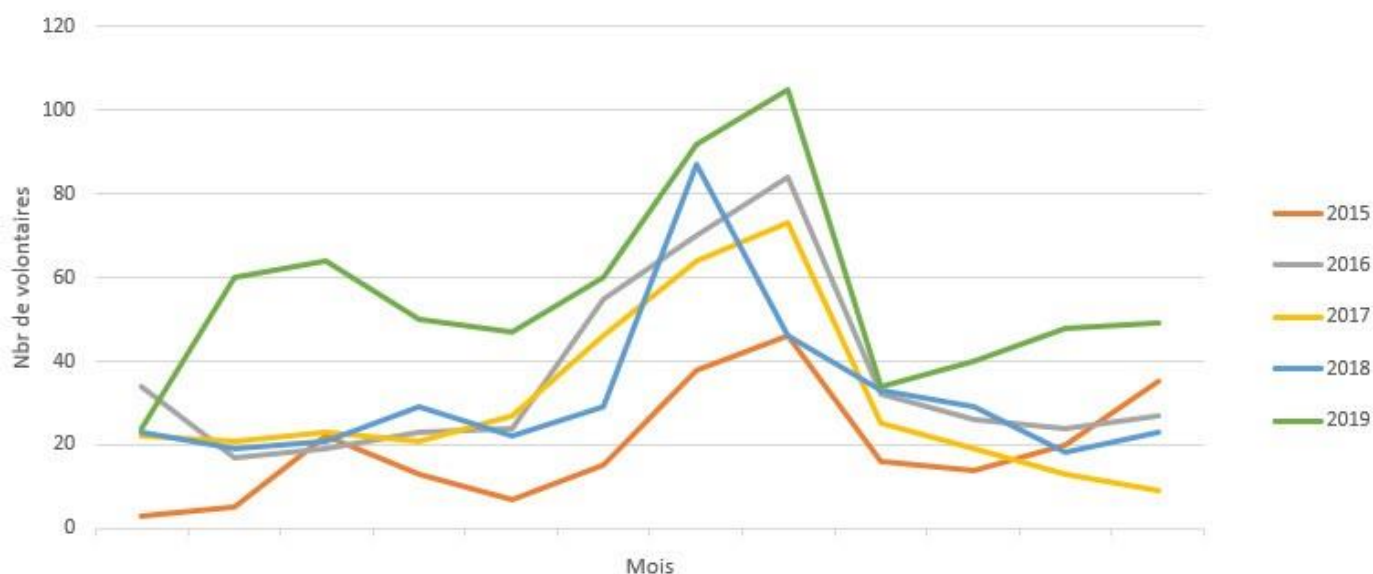
The year 2019 has proved to be a decisive year for SOS Chrétiens d'Orient in Armenia. Our occasional presence in Armenia was made possible by the deceased Father Hovsep Hanna Bidoyan, former priest of the Armenian Catholic Church in Qamishli, Syria. Contact-making trips were made in early 2018 by Alexander Goodarzy, Head of Mission in Syria and Development Officer. We started by supporting projects for Christian children in Armenia. Since summer 2019, volunteers started to arrive on Armenian soil. They went to the village of Arpeni in the Shirak region of north-west Armenia to help run the Toroos summer camp, which ended with the Armenian Catholic Youth Days.

CHRISTMAS IN ARMENIA

We then travelled to Gyumri on 30 December 2019 to meet families in remote and isolated villages. The volunteers had the chance to attend the Christmas mass celebrated in the Cathedral of St. Gregory the Illuminator in Yerevan, the Armenian capital, and then travel to Nagorno-Karabakh in the Artsakh Republic. With this first contact during the Christmas mission in Artsakh, we were able to put a solid foundation for a new collaboration for the benefit of the Christian populations in a region ravaged by war.

VOLUNTEERS IN THE CORE OF ACTION

Evolution présence volontaire



PERSPECTIVES OF 2020

THE CONSTRUCTION OF AN UNDERGROUND CHURCH

SOS Chrétiens d'Orient is supporting Father Jean, a Greek Melkite Catholic priest, in his project to create a troglodyte sanctuary in the north of the Bekaa plain in Lebanon. This project was made possible thanks to a family of faithful who offered the land where the site is located.

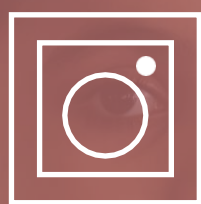
REOPENING OF THE TRIPOLI MISSION

In order to protect our volunteers, the local office was closed in 2019 due to major demonstrations in Lebanon. The re-launch of humanitarian activities in Tripoli is planned for early 2020.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PERMANENT MISSION IN ARMENIA

The first contacts in Armenia, made since 2018, allow our organization to consider establishing a permanent office in 2020. Armenia will therefore welcome its first volunteers in 2020.

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL NETWORKS



INSTAGRAM

soschretiensdorient
volontaires.sos



TWITTER

SOSCdOrient



YOUTUBE

SOS Chrétiens d'Orient



TIKTOK

soschretiensdorient



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TELEGRAM

SOS Chrétiens d'Orient