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Prayer appeal for earthquake victims

AID to the Church in Need (ACN) is appealing for prayer amid alarming reports of two earthquakes killing more than 1,200 people and causing havoc in north-west Syria and south Turkey. Catholic charity ACN received reports from project partners in Syria about the devastation including news of former project partner Archbishop Emeritus Jean-Clement Jeanbart narrowly escaping death when a building collapsed in Aleppo.

Regina Lynch, Director of Projects, ACN (International) said: “The Church in Syria is shocked by the catastrophe. Even as far away as Beirut, people went down to the streets, worried that another explosion was about to unsettle their country. “For now, the Church is checking on its people and families. All ACN staff in Aleppo, Homs and Damascus are doing fine.

“We are worried about Monsignor Jean-Clement Jeanbart, the former Melkite Catholic Archbishop of Aleppo, whose building collapsed and who we have been told is now in hospital but recovering. Also, two priests have been stuck under the rubble.”

Father Emad Daher was buried alive and it appears that Father Majdi Bonja was also in the building when it collapsed.

Ms Lynch continued: “A few minutes ago ACN got the sad news that a young Christian, Albert Tenikjian, and his mother died in a collapsed building. “No one seems to know the extent of the deaths, but it seems to keep going up and up and up. We are asking all benefactors for prayers.”

Two earthquakes have now struck the region – the second of which occurred at around 10:24 (GMT) yesterday (Monday, 6<sup>th</sup> February). The first, which registered 7.8 on the richter scale, took place just before midnight. Its epicentre was near the city of Gaziantep, capital of the eponymous province which borders Syria. More than 900 people are reported to have died in Turkey, and more than 300 in Syria.



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