



Polish Aid Organization Visits Assyrian Refugees in Syria

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Damascus (AINA) -- The Polish based **Aid to the Church in Need** (ACN) organization visited Assyrian and Mandaean refugees from Iraq in the Jarmana and Kashkool districts of Damascus. Father Waldemar Cisło, director of ACN, and Anna Walczyk, of [Ann Media](#), interviewed many Assyrians, most of whom have been in Syria since 2004. According to various estimates, about 40-50% Of the 1.2 million Iraqi refugees in Syria are Assyrians (read [report](#) on Assyrian refugees in Jordan).

Iraqi Refugees cannot work officially in Syria. Some work for Christian organizations and Christian owned hotels. "The situations of Iraqi Christians is very complicated," says Anna Walczyk, "they are homesick but it is to dangerous for them to go back to Iraq."

The refugees receive support from various international organizations, such as Caritas, and from individual priests, such as Father Khalil Jaar of Amman and Father Romulado of Damascus. There are reports of corruption, with some members of the clergy receiving money from aid organizations but not distributing it to the needy.

"The refugees repeatedly ask when help from the United States and Europe will come," says Walczyk.

ACN will send relief supplies for the refugees in March of 2010. ACN will also be sending support for internally displaced Assyrians in north Iraq, in the town of Qaraqosh near Arbel, where Assyrians from Baghdad have sought safety. "They need everything," says Walczyk, "they have to build schools, hospitals, they need medicine and food for children such as powdered milk. What is important is that our help will go directly to Iraqi people because we will directly work with the priests and nuns."



Anna Walczyk with Assyrian nuns from Qaraqosh, Iraq



Fr. Waldemar Cislo with Chaldean priest celebrate mass