

PRESS RELEASE

Deadly bombing raids on Artsakh: SOS Chrétien

s d'Orient calls for the immediate great powers intervention

20 September 2023. The 120,000 Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh (called Artsakh by Armenians) have just spent their first night under the bombs. Three years after the 44-day war, Azerbaijan is launching a new military offensive against the enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh. According to the authorities in Artsakh, about 29 people have already died, including 2 civilians, and more than 200 have been injured. SOS Chrétiens d'Orient is calling for immediate intervention by great powers to stop this lethal invasion.

120 000 Armenians of Artsakh have been subjected to a severe Azerbaijan's blockade since 12 December 2022, and now they are under bombing raids since yesterday. Stepanakert the capital, Martouni, Mardakert and other villages in the various districts have been bombed by Azerbaijani army forces. This new Azerbaijani aggression bears witness to its strategy of intimidation and ethnic cleansing against the Armenians of Artsakh who, despite the danger to their lives, have chosen to remain living on their land.

SOS Chrétiens d'Orient has been present in Armenia since the breakout of the 44-day war in September 2020. Since then, numerous projects have been carried out in Armenia and Artsakh, particularly for displaced people fleeing the conflict.

In 2022, SOS Chrétiens d'Orient funded the renovation of a school in Martouni, which was inaugurated by Aznavuryan Saryan, the town's mayor. Today we have just learned of his probable death as a result of the bombardments. SOS Chrétiens d'Orient stands in solidarity with his family in their grief and prayers for his soul to rest in peace. According to the Artsakh authorities, 29 people have lost their lives, including 2 civilians, and about 200 others have been injured.

A few days ago, SOS Chrétiens d'Orient received His Eminence the Reverend Cardinal Raymond Burke. Here are the words he addressed to the Armenian people: "*Let us say loud and clear what Our Lord inspires us in our hearts on behalf of our Armenian brothers and sisters, so that all may hear. Let us unceasingly lift up fervent prayers to Our Lord for the Armenian people. Let us also stand by their sides. Let us bring them what to eat and drink.*"

SOS Chrétiens d'Orient urges you to join its prayers and calls for the immediate great powers intervention in order to stop the ethnic cleansing of 120,000 Armenians in Artsakh.

The directors of SOS Chrétiens d'Orient welcome all media to testify the situation.

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SOS Chrétiens d'Orient, founded in 2013, has established itself on 3 continents and in 9 countries: Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan, Pakistan, Armenia and Ethiopia, as well as in Ukraine in 2022 and 2023. 10 years of action means 3,000 international volunteers in the field, 50 employees, 400,000 beneficiaries and more than 2,000 projects realised. There's still so much to do! Christians in the Middle East, Caucasus and North-East Africa suffer violence and discrimination. Instead of indignation, SOS Chrétiens d'Orient prefers to act thanks to its expertise based on its 6 pillars of action: Emergency aid, construction and rehabilitation, economic and social development, cultural and heritage development, education and youth aid, medical support, etc.