



URGENT APPEAL

AFTERMATH OF THE DECEMBER 2013 SNOW STORM in the WESTBANK

A cold weather system descended on Palestine starting Thursday December 11th, 2013 bringing with it a significant drop in temperatures, high winds, heavy rain, and dropping the next day a large volume of snow in a short period of time. The wrath of the snow storm was felt rather quickly not allowing for much joy of playing in the snow or enjoying the view, for it knocked out electric power and phone lines, stranded motorists, closed schools, businesses, roads, and made life conditions for many Palestinians hazardous even in their own homes.

The Union of Agriculture Work Committees (UAWC) staff and committees were in emergency mode facing harsh dangerous conditions reaching out to access the situation in different parts of the West Bank to find significant damage by the storm in Hebron, the rural surrounding areas and Area "C" where residents consist of a population suffering extreme poverty and harsh conditions to start with.

UAWC sends this urgent appeal to the international community based on its findings requesting that the international donor community intervene at two different levels including emergency and humanitarian assistance in the quickest possible way providing suffering families immediately with makeshift accommodations as needed to protect damaged shelters, distribution of emergency shelter kits including plastic sheets and tools services, wood for heating, thermal blankets, dry warm clothes and shoes, food kits and health care services and medicine as needed especially for children, females including caretakers, pregnant women, and nursing women, the elderly, and the ill.

The livelihood of the population in these areas is mainly dependent on agriculture. The UAWC has estimated the damage in the agriculture sector in the West Bank to be at approximately 8 million dollars based on the last 30 hours of fieldwork. In UAWC's outreach visits, it witnessed many of the barracks protecting livestock collapsed under the heavy weight of the snow, exposing livestock to harsh weather conditions in addition to the lack of fodder for nourishment. These conditions are anticipated to hurt the livestock causing disease and loss if not addressed immediately.

Furthermore, farmers who live off the land have witnessed their crops destroyed, their fruit and olive trees damaged, their greenhouses destroyed, and their grapevines in need of hoisting properly to protect from a lost season. Of immediate urgency is the work on the greenhouses and the grapevines which are significant in the immediate livelihood of these farmers. This followed by addressing the rest of the issues in farming.

UAWC appeals to those who can help to assist the hurt farmers, herders, and their families who represent the poorest and most vulnerable in Palestine in recovering from the damage that they suffered in hope that they can continue to support their families through their livelihood as best as they can. This in addition to preventing an increase in threatened health, poverty, and food insecurity among many these Palestinian families.

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