



SOVEREIGN MILITARY HOSPITALLER ORDER
OF ST JOHN OF JERUSALEM OF RHODES AND OF MALTA



The Sovereign Order of Malta at a Glance

A 900 year-old mission
of care



Sovereign Order of Malta

The Sovereign Order of Malta is an institution operating medical, social and humanitarian projects in 120 countries. A subject of international law and a lay religious order of the Catholic Church, the Sovereign Order of Malta has bilateral diplomatic relations with over 100 states and the European Union, and permanent observer status at the United Nations and its specialized agencies. It is neutral, impartial and apolitical.

The Order of Malta is especially involved in helping people living in the midst of armed conflicts and natural disasters by providing medical assistance, caring for refugees and distributing medicines, food and basic equipment for survival. Day-to-day, its broad spectrum of social projects provide constant support to excluded members of society. Across the world, the Order of Malta is dedicated to the preservation of human dignity and the care of all those in need, regardless of race or religion.

Founded in Jerusalem in the 11th century, the Order of Malta has a long history of service to the vulnerable and the sick. This 900-year history is reflected in its full name: Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St John of Jerusalem of Rhodes and of Malta. Since 1834 the Order of Malta's government seat has been in Rome, where it is guaranteed extraterritorial rights.

The Order of Malta operates through 12 Pories, 48 national Associations, 133 diplomatic missions, 1 worldwide relief agency and 33 national relief corps, as well as numerous hospitals, medical centres and specialist foundations. It does not pursue any economic or political goal and does not depend on any other state or government.

“The Order of Malta's members and volunteers around the world are proud of their history and traditions, which they translate daily into a commitment to alleviate human suffering. In its unique configuration as a religious order, sovereign institution and medical and humanitarian organisation, the Order of Malta continuously extends its activities to respond to requests for aid and assistance.”



Lieutenant ad Interim
Fra' Ruy Gonçalo do Valle Peixoto de Villas Boas

A medical and social millenary tradition

The Order of Malta is permanently present with medical, social and humanitarian projects in most countries in the world. Its 13,500 members, 80,000 permanent volunteers and qualified staff of 42,000 professionals – most of whom are medical personnel and paramedics – form an efficient network that includes everything from hospital work, healthcare and emergency relief for people living through war or famine, to intervention in areas hit by natural disasters, general medical care and social services. Its programmes, run independently or within a framework of partnerships with governments and international agencies, are now active in 120 countries.

The Order of Malta's social care programmes reach out to thousands of people in need of dedicated care. Dementia patients, the severely disabled and people requiring palliative care receive constant attention in

specialist centres. In response to poverty brought on by the economic crisis, additional soup kitchens and food banks are operational. The Order of Malta both supports and directly manages several hundred medical centres, 20 hospitals and 110 homes for the elderly, as well as first-aid and ambulance crews.

Aid for the victims of natural catastrophes and armed conflicts has intensified in recent decades. Through its national Associations and its worldwide relief agency, Malteser International, the Order of Malta provides emergency medical and humanitarian aid all over the world, and works with the affected populations to implement reconstruction and disaster preparedness programmes. With a goal of long-term development, the Order of Malta stays after the crisis has passed with the objective of reducing poverty and vulnerability.

Humanitarian diplomacy

The humanitarian activities of the Order of Malta around the world are very largely facilitated by the existence of its diplomatic network, which strengthens its relationships with the governments of the countries in which it operates. Thanks to international cooperation agreements concluded between more than 50 states and the government of the Order of Malta, the organisations of the Order on the ground have an operating framework that favours the efficacy and the durability of its actions. This allows it to be integrated into national and regional healthcare systems and to obtain customs facilities for the importing of essential healthcare equipment. Moreover, the diplomatic relations offer stronger protection for humanitarian personnel in the field in hostile areas.

Due to the Order of Malta's character as a neutral, apolitical and independent institution, its humanitarian role and its ongoing activities in 120 countries, the Order is able to intervene as a mediator in disputes. It has participated in peacekeeping operations by providing medical assistance to the United Nations forces involved in operations in Central America, in Kuwait, Rwanda, Timor-Leste, in Afghanistan, as well as in situations of conflict in Lebanon, Iraq and Palestine, as it has done in the past in Biafra, Cambodia, the Balkans and Hungary.

At a time when tensions are rising, the reputation of the Order of Malta ensures it is accepted as a symbol of peace among peoples, factions, ethnic groups and religions.



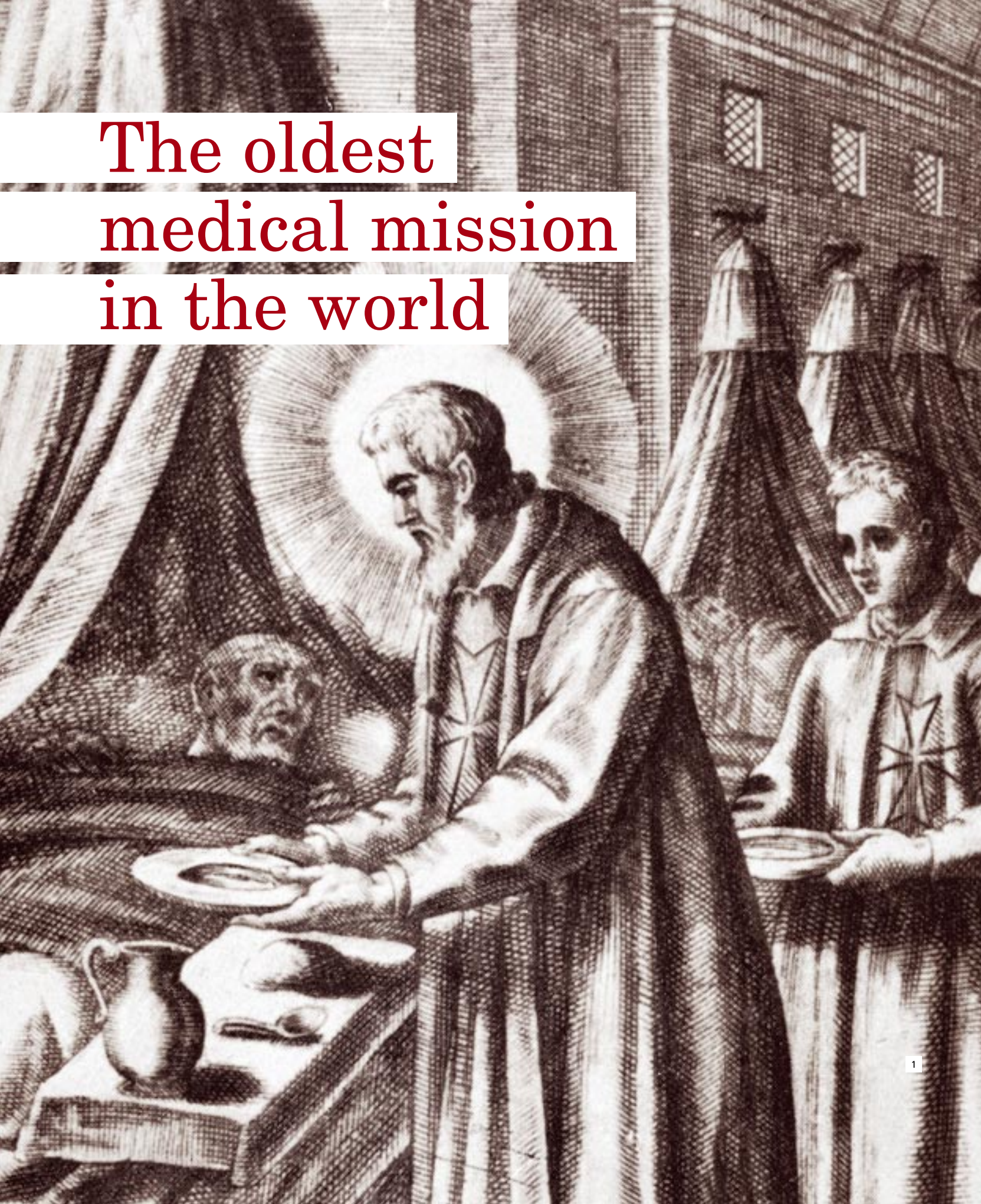
Grand Chancellor Albrecht Freiherr von Boeselager addresses the Marrakesh Summit to adopt the Global Compact

Key emergency interventions of the 21st century

Refugee crisis, DR Congo	2003
Tsunami, South-East Asia	2004
Hurricane Katrina, USA	2005
Earthquake, Pakistan	
IDP crisis, Afghanistan	
Earthquake, Peru	2007
Cyclone Nargis, Myanmar	2008
Floods, India	
Migrant rescue, Southern Italy	
Earthquake, Italy	2009
Earthquake, Indonesia	
Cholera epidemic, Zimbabwe	
Typhoon Ketsana, Vietnam	
Ecological disaster, Hungary	2010
Earthquake, Haiti	
Floods, Pakistan	
Famine, Horn of Africa	2011
Tropical Storm, Philippines	
Earthquake, Turkey	
Refugee crisis, Mali	2012
Earthquake, Italy	
Extreme cold, Romania	
Refugee crisis, Syria	
Typhoon Haiyan, Philippines	2013
IDP crisis, Iraq	2014
IDP crisis, CAR	
Ebola epidemic, Liberia	
Floods, Serbia	
Earthquake, Nepal	2015
Migrant rescue, Greece	2016
Earthquake, Central Italy	
Refugee crisis, Venezuela and Colombia	2018
Covid-19 pandemic	2020

Date marks start of intervention, projects are ongoing in most countries

The oldest
medical mission
in the world





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A mission initiated in Jerusalem, with the first hospital created by the Hospitallers in the eleventh century. A place where the sick and the wounded, regardless of their origin, religion or social background, could come for medical care – a concept before its time. Throughout the following nine centuries, that fundamental principle has continued to inspire the members of the Order of Malta. Today, the mission to help the vulnerable and the sick – the oldest medical mission in the world – is performed on six continents.



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1. Blessed Gerard, founder of the Order, in the first hospital in Jerusalem
2. Holy Infirmary, 16th century, Malta
3. Hospital train during the First World War
4. Ambulance aircraft after earthquake in Morocco, 1960
5. Emergency medical care, Vietnam War
6. Aid after earthquake in Friuli, Italy, 1976

Care beyond boundaries



The Order of Malta's traditional task of caring for refugees and people struck by conflict was never more evident than during the two World Wars, and it continues through the dramatic scenarios of our own times: conflicts in Syria and Iraq, refugee and displaced populations in Burkina Faso, South Sudan, Thailand and Lebanon. The Order's rescue teams in the Southern Mediterranean are often the first to reach migrants fleeing war and persecution by boat. Asylum seekers on the European mainland receive medical care and legal assistance.



- 7. Emergency aid for migrants fleeing to Lampedusa, Italy
- 8. Ambulance service, camp for Malian refugees in Burkina Faso
- 9. Two clinics provide displaced Iraqis with medical care
- 10. Humanitarian and medical aid for Syrian refugees, Lebanon
- 11. Healthcare training, refugee camp, Thai-Myanmar border



Reaching out
to the excluded



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Despite the universal right to health, millions of people across the world live without basic medical care. The Order of Malta reaches out to the excluded through mobile clinics, hospitals and day-care centres. Its maternity hospital in Bethlehem offers the only place for women of the region to give birth under good medical conditions. Some interventions are unique, like healthcare for inmates in Nairobi's prisons, while others are pioneering, like advanced therapy to treat dementia. Emergency or routine, our mission remains the preservation of human dignity.

- 12. Medical outreach for people with HIV/AIDS, South Africa
- 13. Field hospital for Syrian refugees in Turkish border town Kilis
- 14. Healthcare for prisoners, Nairobi, Kenya
- 15. Intensive care unit, maternity hospital, Bethlehem
- 16. Snoezelen (controlled multi-sensory environment) therapy for dementia, France



Treating epidemics and neglected diseases



The Covid-19 pandemic mobilised the Order of Malta's entities which intervened in the five continents by providing medical assistance, while voluntary structures supported those affected by the socio-economic consequences of the virus. The Order also provided medical assistance during the Ebola epidemic and continues to carry out numerous activities to fight the most widespread epidemics such as tuberculosis, malaria and HIV/AIDS, which are still the leading causes of death in Africa. Having fought over the last fifty years to eradicate the scourge of leprosy, the Order now runs research programmes for the care and rehabilitation of people suffering from Hansen's disease, particularly in Africa, South East Asia and South America.

- 17. Leprosy control programme, South Sudan
- 18. Testing for malaria, Myanmar
- 19. Rehabilitation for leprosy patients, Vietnam
- 20. Education and treatment to prevent tuberculosis, Kenya
- 21. Anti-covid health checks at airports, Italy

Intervening in emergencies





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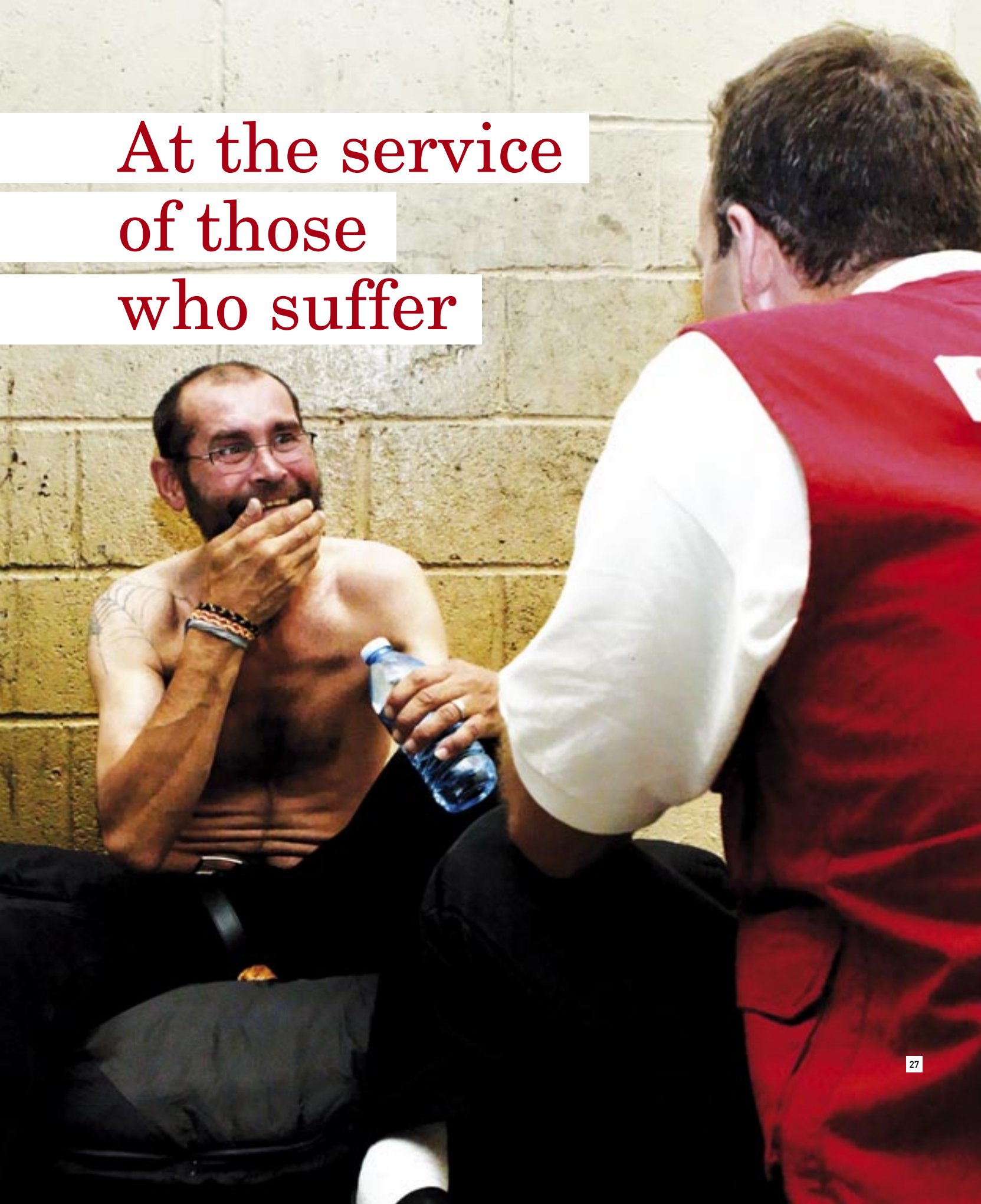


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Every day Order of Malta doctors and volunteers confront realities that are dramatic. Malteser International was one of the first to arrive after the earthquake in Haiti, in the Philippines devastated by Typhoon Haiyan, the Horn of Africa struck by famine and in Nepal following repeated earthquakes. Developments projects as well as disaster risk reduction programmes are ongoing in several continents.

- 22. Emergency relief sent after earthquakes, Nepal
- 23. Disaster prevention campaign in schools, Sri Lanka
- 24. Medical teams on duty in the hours after the November 2015 terroristic attacks, Paris
- 25. Emergency aid after earthquake, Haiti
- 26. Distribution of staple foods, Horn of Africa drought crisis

At the service
of those
who suffer



The Order of Malta's centuries-old mission of care is carried out daily through its social assistance projects. Reaching out to people isolated by society, like the homeless, prisoners and ethnic minorities, or those who can be pushed to its fringes, such as the elderly and disabled. The Order intervenes in situations of discrimination- such as those on the afflicted Dalit ethnic group in India. The Order also promotes social integration for Roma people in several European countries.



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- 27. Street support for the homeless, Paris
- 28. Medical care for disabled in isolated communities, Hungary
- 29. Support for the elderly living in poverty, Romania
- 30. Regular food for the homeless, California, USA
- 31. Supplying Roma people with staple food, Ukraine
- 32. Creating a self-sufficient community for discriminated Dalits, India

The Order of Malta's activities are underway in 120 countries

The Americas

In America, the Order provides specialised programmes in healthcare, home visits to sick people, shelter for single mothers and women who have suffered domestic violence. It provides medical care for disadvantaged children, runs soup kitchens and assists people living in economic distress. The medical services, active in 28 countries, include screening for diabetes, care in hospitals and homes for the elderly. There are programmes for prisoners, street children, for HIV-positive mothers and infants, as well as food banks for the homeless.

Europe

Care for displaced persons, immigrants, the disabled, the homeless, the elderly sick and people with drug addiction dominates programmes in Europe. Members and volunteers also provides training programmes for first-aiders, health education, medical and social care services in remote areas and in underprivileged inner city environments, runs hospitals, old people's homes, transport for the disabled, meals on wheels services, rehabilitation and day care centres, including special centres for people with dementia and a number of first-aid and emergency corps that provide support after natural or civic disasters.



Map indicates capital cities of countries where the Order of Malta runs medical, social or humanitarian projects

Africa

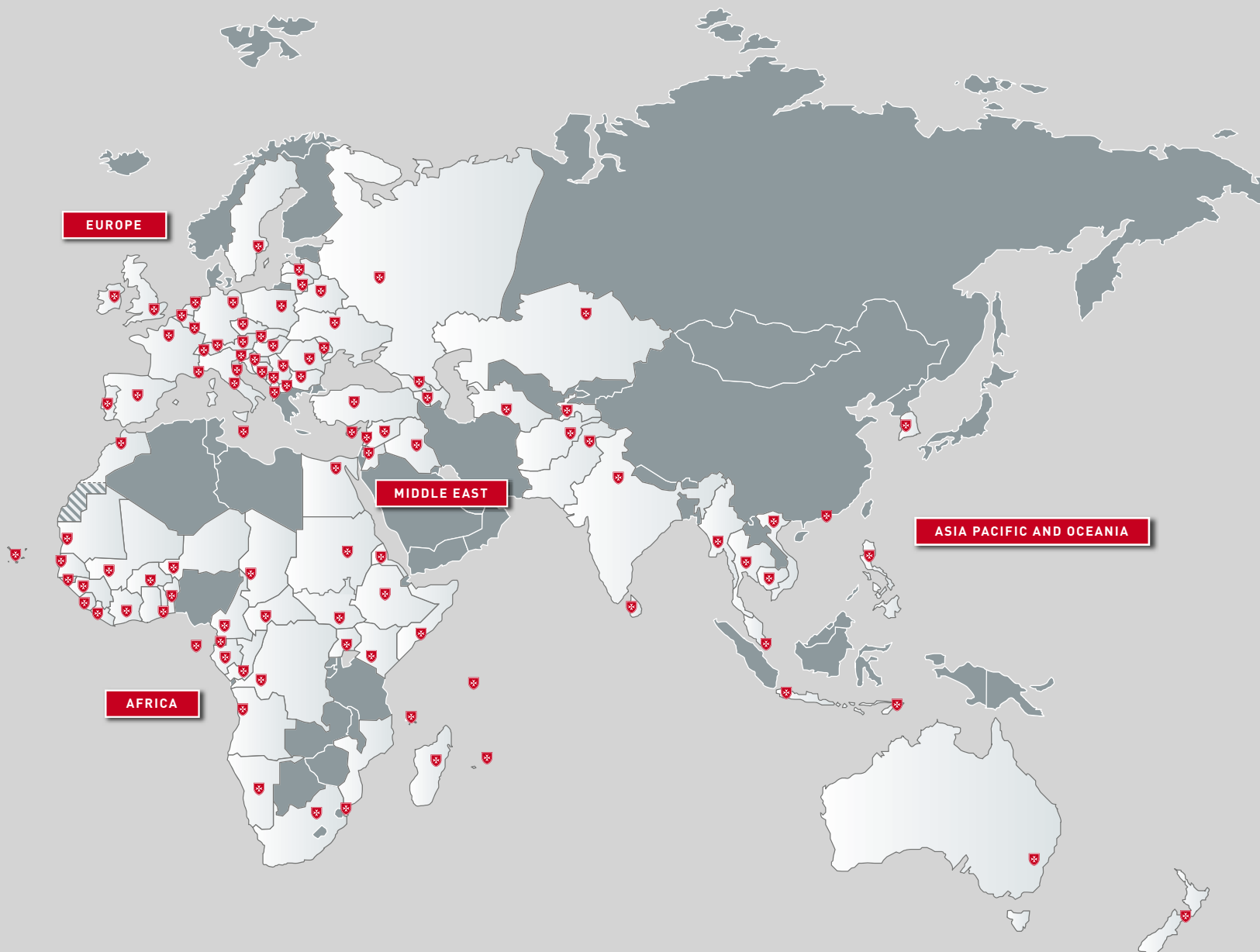
With activities in over 30 countries, the Order of Malta's projects here concentrate on care for HIV positive mothers and infants, on treatment for malaria, tuberculosis, on providing clean water facilities as well as basic health care, and health and psychosociological care to victims of sexual violence. The Order runs health centres and dispensaries in many rural areas, treats and supports people with leprosy and cares for internally displaced persons fleeing famine or conflict.

Middle East

The Order of Malta provides Syrian refugees fleeing their country with emergency aid and medical care in Lebanon and Turkey. It runs medical centres in camps for displaced in Northern Iraq. A range of health clinics and programmes for disabled children are part of the Order's work in Lebanon. More than 4,000 babies are born each year at the Order's maternity hospital in Bethlehem.

Asia Pacific and Oceania

Across Asia and the Pacific the Order of Malta provides emergency aid after natural disasters and conflicts, as well as disaster prevention measures and training, rehabilitation and support for internally displaced persons, refugees and the homeless. The Order of Malta also cares for leprosy patients and supports orphaned children. In Australia support for the homeless is a specialism.



Government of the Order

Composition and operation

The government of the Sovereign Order of Malta has a similar structure to state governments. However, it also includes specific features associated with its nature as a lay religious order, as well as particular terminology evolved from nine centuries of history.

The head of the Order is the Grand Master who governs both as sovereign and as religious superior. He is assisted by the Sovereign Council, which he chairs. From 29 April 2020, following the death of Fra' Giacomo Dalla Torre del Tempio di Sanguinetto, the Sovereign Order of Malta is governed by a Lieutenant ad interim in the person of H.E. Fra' Ruy Gonçalo do Valle Peixoto de Villas Boas. He will stay in office until the election of a new Grand Master or the Lieutenant of the Grand Master.

The Sovereign Council is elected for a term of five years and is made up of the Grand Commander (the religious superior of the Order's religious members); Grand Chancellor (Minister for Foreign and Internal Affairs); Grand Hospitaller (Minister for Health and

International Cooperation); Receiver of the Common Treasure (Minister for Finance), together with six other members, all elected by the Chapter General. Although these titles reflect centuries of tradition they are also roles perfectly consistent with 21st century needs. In its unique nature as sovereign and humanitarian institution, the Order led by its government, continuously intervenes in new areas, unremittingly responding to requests for humanitarian aid. Through its diplomatic missions, the Order's government works towards the establishment of new cooperation agreements with other states in the healthcare and humanitarian field.

The Order's system of governance is divided into three powers: legislative power, which resides with the Chapter General - the representative body for the members - and the Grand Master with the Sovereign Council; executive power, which resides with the Sovereign Council; and judicial power, which is in the hands of the Courts of the Order.

The Constitutional Charter and Code governs the life and activities of the Order. In 1997 an Advisory Board was appointed to the Order's government - the Government Council. The Board of Auditors is responsible for economic and financial control. Every five years, the members of these two bodies are elected by the Chapter General. The Order's Courts are Courts of First Instance and of Appeal, with a President, Judges, Judicial Auditors and Auxiliaries. Legal questions of extraordinary importance are submitted for advice to a technical body, the Juridical Advisory Council.



The Magistral Palace in Rome, the Government seat of the Sovereign Order of Malta

Government of the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of Saint John of Jerusalem of Rhodes and of Malta

SOVEREIGN COUNCIL

The Sovereign Council assists the Grand Master in the government of the Order. It is composed of the Grand Master, Grand Commander, Grand Chancellor, Grand Hospitaller and Receiver of the Common Treasure and six Council members. The Sovereign Council is called by the Grand Master and meets at the seat of the Order of Malta at least six times a year and whenever special circumstances require it.

Lieutenant ad interim

HE Fra' Ruy Gonçalo do Valle Peixoto de Villas Boas

HE Fra' Ruy Gonçalo do Valle Peixoto de Villas Boas
Grand Commander

HE Albrecht Freiherr von Boeselager
Grand Chancellor

HE Dominique Prince de La Rochefoucauld-Montbel
Grand Hospitaller

HE János Count Esterházy de Galántha
Receiver of the Common Treasure

SOVEREIGN COUNCIL MEMBERS

HE Fra' John T. Dunlap
HE Fra' Emmanuel Rousseau
HE Fra' Gottfried von Kühnelt-Leddihn
HE Fra' Roberto Viazzo
HE Winfried Graf Henckel von Donnersmarck
HE Mauro Bertero Gutiérrez

GOVERNMENT COUNCIL

Vice-President

Peter de Szabadhegy de Csallöközmegeyercs
Councillors
Olivier Freiherr von Loudon-Vorst-Gudenau
Francis Joseph McCarthy
Patrick Jabre
Lady Celestria Hales
José Maria Coello de Portugal

BOARD OF AUDITORS

President

Dominicus Freiherr von und zu Mentzingen
Councillors
Niels Carl A. Lorijn
Justin S. Simpson
Gérald Berger
Paolo Fabris de Fabris
Alternate Councillors
Guy-Antoine de La Rochefoucauld, Duc de La Roche-Guyon
Luca Brondelli, dei Conti di Brondello

PRELATE

Mons. Jean Laffitte

BOARD OF COMMUNICATIONS

President

Ulrich von Glaunach zum Kazenstain
Councillors
Alain de Quengo de Tonquedec
Douglas Graf von Saurma-Jeltsch
Christopher Poch
Luca Aragone
Oumayma Farah Rizk
Dominik Brichta

SECRETARY GENERAL FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Amb. Stefano Ronca

JURIDICAL COUNCIL

President

Prof. Avv. Arturo Maresca
Vice-President
Prof. Damiano Nocilla
Secretary General
Prof. Avv. Paolo Papanti Pelletier de Bermigny
Members
Prof. Avv. Giancarlo Perone
Prof. Avv. Leonardo Perrone

MAGISTRAL COURT OF APPEAL

President

Prof. Avv. Arturo Maresca
Judges
Prof. Avv. Leonardo Perrone
Avv. Massimo Massella Ducci Teri
Prof. Avv. Pietro Sirena

MAGISTRAL COURT OF FIRST INSTANCE

President

Prof. Avv. Paolo Papanti Pelletier de Bermigny
Judges
Prof. Avv. Venerando Marano
Prof. Avv. Paolo Morozzo Della Rocca
Prof. Avv. Arnaldo Morace Pinelli
Chancellor of the Magistral Courts
Col. Alessandro Bianchi

COMMISSION FOR THE PROTECTION OF NAMES AND EMBLEMS

President

Fra' John T. Dunlap

Diplomatic Mission

Linking into humanitarian activity

The Sovereign Order of Malta has bilateral diplomatic relations with 109 countries and the European Union, official relations with 5 countries, official representations and permanent observer status at the United Nations and numerous international organisations. This provides a unique diplomatic humanitarian network which is both a demonstration of its sovereignty and an operational instrument for its humanitarian activities.

Diplomatic relations also mean unparalleled access, at the political level, to national governments and international organisations.

There is an important operational link between the Order's diplomatic network and its humanitarian activity. The Order's embassies in different parts of the world are tasked with helping the medical and humanitarian activities of its national Associations, or of its worldwide relief agency, Malteser International.

The role of this unique diplomatic network is:

- to promote cooperation with international organisations operating in the field: the Order's diplomatic representations serve to initiate contact, to conclude agreements or to resolve difficulties;
- to provide diplomatic protection when required, such as when the Order of Malta's activities are developed in countries where the rule of law is less than fully guaranteed;
- to obtain customs and tax exemption to cover medical supplies and other goods essential in an emergency (where applicable following the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, Art.36).

In the international political field, the Order of Malta is neutral, impartial and non-political. Because of these characteristics the Order can act as a mediator.



Grand Hospitaller Dominique de La Rochefoucauld-Montbel addresses the UN General Assembly

The Order's diplomatic relations worldwide

THE ORDER OF MALTA HAS DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH 110 COUNTRIES:

EUROPE

Albania, Austria, Belarus, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, Holy See, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malta, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation*, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Ukraine.

THE AMERICAS

Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Uruguay, Venezuela.

ASIA

Afghanistan, Armenia, Cambodia, Georgia, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Philippines, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Turkmenistan.

AFRICA

Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cap Vert, Central Africa, Chad, Comoros, Congo (Democratic Republic of the), Congo (Republic of the), Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Togo.

OCEANIA

Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru.

* Relations with the Russian Federation are maintained through a diplomatic special mission.

THE ORDER OF MALTA HAS OFFICIAL RELATIONS WITH:

- Belgium
- Canada
- France
- Luxembourg
- Switzerland

THE ORDER OF MALTA HAS RELATIONS AT AMBASSADOR LEVEL WITH:

- Palestine

Multilateral relations

THE ORDER OF MALTA HAS RELATIONS AT AMBASSADOR LEVEL WITH:

- European Union

THE ORDER OF MALTA HAS PERMANENT OBSERVER MISSIONS TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND ITS SPECIALISED AGENCIES:

United Nations - New York

United Nations - Geneva

United Nations - Vienna

ESCAP - United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (Bangkok)

FAO - Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (Rome)

IAEA - International Atomic Energy Agency (Vienna)

IFAD - International Fund for Agricultural Development (Rome)

UNEP - United Nations Environment Programme (Nairobi)

UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Paris)

UNHCHR - United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (Geneva)

UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (Geneva)

UNIDO - United Nations Industrial Development Organization (Vienna)

UNODC - UN Office for Drugs and Crime (Vienna)

WFP - World Food Programme of the United Nations (Rome)

WHO - World Health Organization (Geneva)

THE ORDER OF MALTA HAS DELEGATIONS OR REPRESENTATIONS TO INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS:

AU - African Union (Addis Ababa)

COE - Council of Europe (Strasbourg)

CPLP - Community of Portuguese Language Countries (Lisbon)

CTBTO - Preparatory Commission for the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban Treaty Organization (Vienna)

ICCROM - International Centre for the study of the preservation and restoration of cultural property (Rome)

ICMM - International Committee of Military Medicine (Brussels)

ICRC - International Committee of the Red Cross (Geneva)

IDB - Inter-American Development Bank (Washington D.C.)

IHL - International Institute of Humanitarian Law (Sanremo, Geneva)

IFRC - International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (Geneva)

IOF - International Organization of La Francophonie (Paris)

IOM - International Organization for Migration (Geneva)

PAM - Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (Malta)

SICA - Central American Integration System (San Salvador)

UNIDROIT - International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (Rome)

UNILAT - Latin Union (Santo Domingo, Paris)

970 years of history



1048 Jerusalem

The birth of the Order of St John dates back to around **1048**. Merchants from the ancient Marine Republic of Amalfi obtained from the Caliph of Egypt the authorisation to build a church, convent and hospital in Jerusalem, to care for pilgrims of any religious faith or race. The Order of St John of Jerusalem – the monastic community which ran the hospital – became independent under the guidance of its founder, Blessed Gerard. Pope Paschal II approved the foundation of the Hospital with the Bull of 15th February **1113**, and placed it under the aegis of the Church, granting it the right to freely elect its superiors without interference from other lay or religious authorities. By virtue of the Papal Bull, the Hospital became a lay-religious order. All the knights were religious, bound by the three monastic vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. The constitution of the Kingdom of Jerusalem obliged the Order to take on the military defence of the sick and the pilgrims, as well as guarding its medical centres and main roads. The Order thus added the task of defending the faith to that of its hospitaller mission. As time went on, the Order adopted the white eight-pointed cross that is still its symbol today.

1291 Cyprus

After the fall of Saint John of Acre and the loss of the Holy Land in **1291**, the Hospitaller Order of St John transferred its seat and hospital to Limassol on the island of Cyprus, where it had been present since **1210** thanks to the concession of important properties, privileges and commercial rights. It continued to build new hospitals faithful to its hospitaller mission, and benefitted from the strategic position of the island to constitute a naval fleet to protect pilgrims on the sea route to the Holy Land. The number of members coming from all over Europe continued to grow and contributed to the strengthening of the Order's structure, acquiring new possessions on the Mediterranean shore. Amongst these were the important port of Famagusta, the city of Nicosia and numerous



Commanderies. Due to the consequences of increasing instability in Cyprus, which resulted in restricting their expansion on the island, the Hospitallers sought to consider a more suitable base for the seat of the Order of St John on the island of Rhodes. Nevertheless, Magistral Lieutenants remained present in Cyprus to govern the Pories and Commanderies (said to have been over

sixty by 1374) for another century until the middle of the fifteen century, when the knights were recalled to the Conventual Seat in Rhodes.



1310 Rhodes

Under the leadership of Grand Master Fra' Foulques de Villaret, in 1307, the knights of the Order of St John landed with their fleet in Rhodes, completing the acquisition of the island by **1310** when it transferred its seat there. Besides offering natural ports for its fleets, the island was a strategic location that linked the eastern and western worlds.

From then, the defence of the Christian world required the organisation of a naval force. Thus the Order built a powerful fleet and sailed the Eastern Mediterranean, fighting many famous battles.

The Order's independence from other nations granted by Pontifical deed, and its universally recognised right to maintain and deploy armed forces and to appoint ambassadors, has constituted the grounds for its international sovereignty. In the early 14th century the institutions of the Order and the knights who came to Rhodes from every corner of Europe were grouped according to the

languages they spoke. There were initially seven groups of Langues (Tongues): Provence, Auvergne, France, Italy, Aragon (Navarre), England (with Scotland and Ireland) and Germany, and later on an eighth: Castille and Portugal. Each Langue included Priors or Grand Priors, Bailiwicks and Commanderies.

The Order was governed by its Grand Master (Prince of Rhodes) together with the Council, it minted its own money and maintained diplomatic relations with other states. The senior positions of the Order were given to representatives of different Langues. The seat of the Order, the Convent, was composed of religious members of various nationalities.

In **1523**, after six months of siege and fierce combat against the fleet and army of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent, the knights were forced to surrender and left Rhodes with military honours.



1530 Malta

The Order remained without a territory of its own until **1530**, when Grand Master Fra' Philippe de Villiers de l'Isle Adam took possession of the island of Malta, granted to the Order by Emperor Charles V with the approval of Pope Clement VII. It was decided that the Order should remain neutral in any war between Christian nations.

In **1565** the knights, led by Grand Master Fra' Jean de la Vallette defended the island for more than three months during the Great Siege of the Ottomans. Following this victory, the city and port of La Valletta was built and named after the Grand Master, its founder.

The knights transformed Malta, undertaking urban construction projects: palaces and churches were built, as well as formidable new defence bastions and gardens. Architecture flourished as well as artistic patronage.



The island was given a large new hospital, considered to be one of the best organised and most effective in the world. A school of anatomy was also founded and the faculty of medicine followed. In particular, the Order contributed to the development of ophthalmology and pharmacology. As well as these activities, for centuries the Order of Malta's fleet took part in the most important manoeuvres in the Mediterranean against the Ottoman fleet and against North African pirates.

1571 Battle of Lepanto

In **1571** the fleet of the Order of Malta took part in the Battle of Lepanto, contributing to the victory of the Christian fleet against the Ottoman Empire's expansion into Europe.

1798 Difficult years

Two hundred years later, during his Egyptian campaign in **1798**, Napoleon Bonaparte occupied Malta for its strategic value. Because of the Order's code prohibiting them from raising weapons against other Christians, the knights were forced to leave their island. The Treaty of Amiens, signed in **1802**, which established the sovereign rights of the Order over the island of Malta, was never applied.

1834 Rome

After having temporarily resided in Messina, Catania and Ferrara, in **1834** the Order settled definitively in Rome, where it owns, with extraterritorial status, the Magistral Palace and the Magistral Villa on the Aventine Hill.

20th and 21st Centuries

In the second part of the 19th century, the original hospitaller mission became once again the main focus of the Order, growing ever stronger during the last century, most especially because of the contribution of the activities carried out by its Grand Priors and national Associations in so many countries



around the world. Large-scale hospitaller and humanitarian activities were carried out during World War I, and World War II under Grand Master Fra' Ludovico Chigi Albani della Rovere (1931-1951). Under the Grand Masters Fra' Angelo de Mojana di Cologna (1962-1988) and Fra' Andrew Bertie (1988-2008), the projects expanded to reach all six continents.

The Order of Malta in the history of medical aid

1048 First hospital in Jerusalem to receive and assist pilgrims.

1182 First Statute regarding treatment of the sick.

1355 The first infirmary built by the knights in Rhodes.

1489 Inauguration of the new Grand Infirmary in Rhodes.

1533 Establishment of the Infirmary in Malta.

1578 Inauguration of the Holy Infirmary in Malta. One of the largest and best-equipped hospitals in the Mediterranean.

1596 Holy Infirmary extended to accommodate patients with contagious diseases.

1679 School of anatomy and surgery founded in Malta.

1693 Humanitarian mission to Augusta in Sicily, destroyed by an earthquake.

1772 First female medical graduate in Malta.

1783 Humanitarian mission for victims of the earthquake of Messina, Sicily.

1886 First hospital train runs.

1908 Earthquake relief in Messina, Sicily.

1912 Hospital ship Regina Margherita transports 12,000 injured during the italo-turkish war.

1915 First World War: hospital trains impartially assist more than 800,000 injured on war fronts.

1938 First ambulance service of the Order established in Ireland.

1940 Second World War: the Order operates hospitals, medical centres and first-aid posts in numerous European countries.

1953 Creation of Malteser Hilfsdienst, the Order's relief organization in Germany.

1956 Aid for refugees during the Hungarian revolution.

1966 Aid for refugees in Vietnam.

1969 Humanitarian aid in civil war-torn Biafra.

1980 Drought relief in Somalia.

1980 First medical centre opens in Lebanon. Today twenty-eight healthcare structures around the country reduce poverty and isolation.

1981 Earthquake relief in Southern Italy.

1981 Leprosy programme set up in Cambodia.

1985 Aid for victims of famine in Africa.

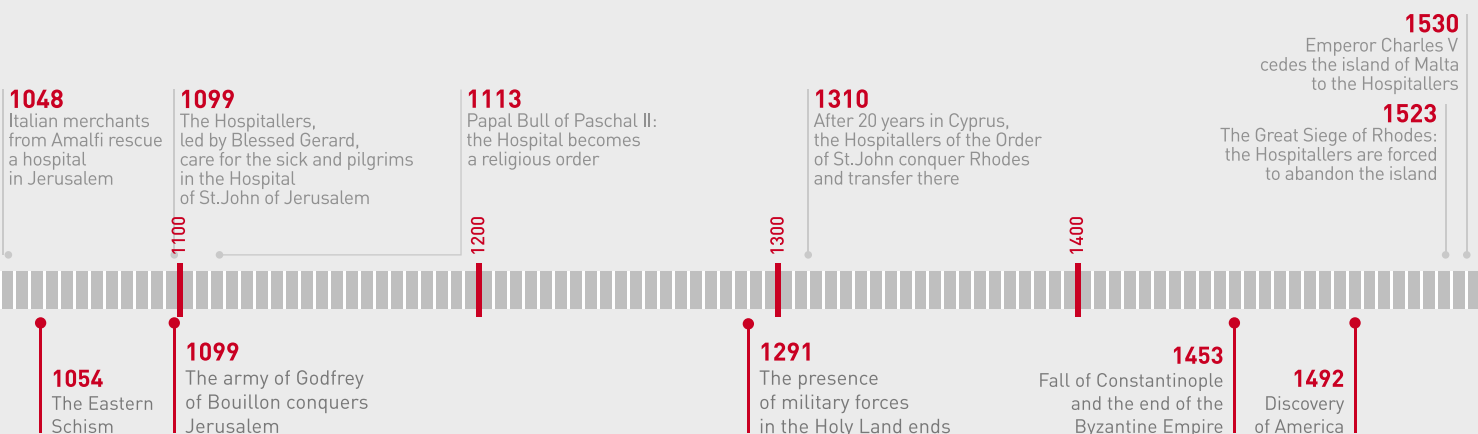
1989 Humanitarian aid for Eastern Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

1990 First infant is born at the Order of Malta's hospital, Bethlehem. Today over 80,000 babies have been delivered, mostly Palestinian.

1991 Humanitarian aid for former Yugoslavia.

1992 Reconstruction aid in Lithuania, Romania, Russia and Ukraine.

Key events in the Order's history



The Sovereign Order of Malta has always been strongly committed to research and innovation. Throughout its history, the Order's medical and welfare expertise and practices have been steadily enriched thanks to the numerous peoples and cultures with which it has come into contact and to the research it has initiated and supported. Following a timeline that begins in the Middles Ages and continues to the present day, here is a list of projects, scientific and medical innovations and humanitarian interventions in which the Order was involved.

1993 Aid for Karen refugees, Thai-Myanmar border.

1994 Aid for the people of Rwanda, a country ravaged by ferocious combat between ethnic groups.

1996 Opening of MAS Saint-Jean de Malte, home for the disabled in Paris.

1996 First Order of Malta children's clinic in the Dominican Republic.

1997 Reconstruction aid in Zaire.

1997 Earthquake relief in Central Italy.

1998 Healthcare in Southern Sudan.

1999 Reconstruction aid in Kosovo and the Balkans.

2001 Relief for refugees in Afghanistan.

2003 Refugee aid in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

2004 Intervention and reconstruction aid after the earthquake in Iran.

2005 Emergency relief and

reconstruction after South-East Asia tsunami.

2006 Reconstruction aid in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina.

2006 Emergency aid during the conflict in Lebanon.

2007 Launch of Prison Ministry in the United States.

2007 Emergency aid after floods in Pakistan, India, Vietnam and Mexico.

2007 First Order school in opens Germany.

2008 Emergency relief and reconstruction following the cyclone in Myanmar.

2009 Emergency aid in Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Democratic Republic of Congo.

2009 Disaster relief and management of two camp sites following the earthquake in L'Aquila, Italy.

2010 Medical assistance for earthquake

victims, Haiti.

2011 Emergency food relief in Kenya after devastating drought in the Horn of Africa.

2012 Campsite with essential provisions for victims of the earthquake in Emilia, Italy.

2012 73rd home for the elderly opens in the United Kingdom.

2012 Assistance to Syrian refugees

2013 Emergency relief measures after Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines

2015 Humanitarian intervention following earthquakes in Nepal

2015 Assistance to refugees in Europe.

2016 Emergency relief after earthquake in Central Italy.

2018 Assistance to Venezuelan refugees in Colombia

2020 Medical and social response to the Covid-19 pandemic

1565

The Order, led by Grand Master Jean de la Vallette, defeats the Ottoman army in the Great Siege of Malta

1798

Napoleon Bonaparte occupies the island and forces the Order to abandon Malta

1834

The government of the Order of Malta is established in Rome

1859

The first national Association of the Order is formed in Germany

1997

The Order's Chapter General approves the new Constitutional Charter and Code

2013

Commemorations mark 900 years since the Order's official recognition

2020

Ninth centenary since the death of the founder Blessed Gerard

1600

1700

1800

1900

2000

1789

French Revolution

1815

Congress of Vienna

1914-1918

First World War

1939-1945

Second World War

1989

Fall of the Berlin Wall

2001

Attack on the Twin Towers

2020

Covid-19 pandemic



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