

# Middle East North Africa Situational Report II

**Reporting Period:** March 6 – 23, 2026

**Focus Areas:** Lebanon and the occupied West Bank

ELCA MENA Desk

Over the past few weeks, the MENA region has been experiencing rapid multi-front escalation following the joint attack on Iran by the U.S. and Israel, with spillover in Lebanon, the Gulf, and the occupied West Bank. The current landscape is marked by cross-border hostilities, indiscriminate missile strikes, and the targeting of civilian-adjacent and densely populated areas, particularly by Israel in Lebanon. Beyond the humanitarian toll, this crisis has introduced wider reverberations in the global economy, including disruption of energy markets, volatility along maritime corridors (especially the Strait of Hormuz), and heightened risks for continued regional instability.

## Lebanon: Intensified Attacks

- In Lebanon, Israeli airstrikes and missiles have killed more than 1,100 civilians, including over 100 children, with more than 2,700 civilians injured.
- An estimated 1 million people have been forcibly displaced. Airstrikes continue to expand into densely populated areas, including parts of Beirut, sharply increasing civilian exposure and the risk of mass-casualty incidents.
- The healthcare system is on the verge of collapse, with healthcare workers continually targeted, multiple facilities damaged or rendered non-functional, and other partially operational facilities facing critical shortages of medical supplies, fuel, and staff.

## West Bank: Structural Oppression Dynamics

- Israeli military incursions into West Bank cities, villages, and refugee camps have grown more frequent and severe and are often followed by campaigns of mass arrests of Palestinians, including children below the age of 18 and women, who are then held in military detention systems.
- Between February 3-16, United Nations reports documented nine Palestinians killed by Israeli forces in the West Bank, including two children; and 137 others injured (78 by Israeli forces and 59 by settlers). Most recently, a Palestinian family, including two young children (5 and 7 years old), was killed by Israeli forces near the West Bank city of Tubas during a military raid on March 15.
- Israel is rapidly expanding its illegal settlement enterprise in the West Bank, which is powered by widespread settler attacks against Palestinians to facilitate land absorption and transfer to Israeli settlers. This represents a flagrant violation of international law.

## ELCA Missionaries & ELCA MENA Desk Response

- Due to the increased security risks, two of our three ELCA missionary households, the LaChonce and Lohr-Sapp families, have been safely and temporarily relocated back to the U.S. for an initial duration of eight weeks, with the potential to extend this time depending on circumstances. The Davis family remains in Cairo.
- With the guidance and support of Service & Justice and Global Mission leadership, these MENA missionaries are set to start their home assignment early (rather than in the summer) and will continue to serve remotely with local partners and to support church-led initiatives.
- MENA Regional Associate Ms. Shadin Nassar is currently based in the West Bank and is closely monitoring the situation on the ground and providing important updates and briefings.
- MENA Desk Director Rev. Gabi Aelabouni remains in close contact with ELCA missionaries as well as local partners including Bishop Dr. Imad Haddad of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL), Middle East Council of Churches (MECC), and Contact and Resource Center (CRC) colleagues and staff in Lebanon to actively evaluate the evolving political landscape and the escalating humanitarian and psycho-social needs.
- ELCA Lutheran Disaster Response in collaboration with the MENA desk have been working closely with our MENA partners in Lebanon and in Palestine to respond to the ongoing disaster of displacement and humanitarian need in the region.

## What can you do?

- Pray for cessation of hostilities in Lebanon, the West Bank, and across the MENA region, for protection of civilians, especially children, and for the safety of local partners operating under these harsh conditions.
- Give to Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR) so they can provide emergency food, shelter, medical care, and support, particularly in Lebanon. Donate [here](#).
- Host returning missionaries in your congregations, help create a space for them to share their experiences from the region, and identify ways to stay connected and informed about their work overseas. For more information, contact [Rev. Gabi Aelabouni](#) and [Rev. Mike Busbey](#).
- Stay involved. Keep praying, learning, advocating, and following updates from the ELCA MENA desk, ELCA Sumud, and Witness in Society. Be on the lookout for action alerts to contact your representatives, demand accountability, and continue leveraging your congregational networks to advocate for justice. For more information, contact the Program Director for ELCA Sumud, [Maddi Froiland](#).