Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be afraid, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you; I will uphold you with my victorious right hand

Isaiah 41:10

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

In this time of despair for our country, we humbly reach out to you, asking for support. We know that during these last days we have been not alone; God has always been with us, and we have felt across the distance all your sincere prayers and thoughts. Thank you for being with us, as walk in a difficult path, and as we come together in unity to help those affected by the earthquake. We are thankful that as a church we are safe, and that no one is injured. Some of our buildings are cracked, but this is nothing compared to what we are watching and hearing around, especially in the city of Durres, where the epicenter of the earthquake was (30km from Tirana), Thumane commune, and Tirane, but also Kurbin and Lezhe.

Today, in this national day of mourning, the Medias report 36 losses of lives, and 658 injured. Until now rescue teams have saved 45 people, which is a miracle, but thousands are homeless. Also, they report of more than 20 people under the ruins. Houses and buildings are destroyed, leaving many under an open sky. This morning our prime minister declared emergency state in the regions of Durres and Tirane, but unfortunately it is impossible to reach out to all those affected. As a church, we have started gathering different kinds of support and we will reach the families through the Evangelical Alliance of Albania, which is one of the collection points in Tirana.

We are witnessing in this time of fear a strong unity between Albanians, who are trying to help one another in all ways possible. The Albanian government has requested help from all hotels and restaurants close to Durres and South Albania, so people can be given shelter and food; many camps are built in order to keep the homeless safe and protected. We feel how many are praying for Albania in this tragedy that has shocked the country all over. Immediate rescue teams came from Kosovo and neighbor countries, EU, Turkey and Israel. Other countries, as well as individuals have donated significant amounts of financial support, and many national and international organizations are doing their best to be of whatever kind of help.

All your financial support will be used for the victims of the terrible earthquake, to help rebuild their homes. We will collaborate with the local power and the Evangelical Alliance of Albania (VUSH). A full report will be provided on how funds will be used, to all those who are willing to support our cause.

PLEASE HELP US HELP!

We take this opportunity to thank you in advance for everything. We humbly ask you to continue praying for our country, and for everyone who is deeply suffering the consequences of this terrible tragedy.

Tel/fax: +35542259503
NIPT J91711001M
Please specify your donation as follows:

**SUPPORT FOR THE FAMILIES AFFECTED BY THE EARTHQUAKE**

Raiffeisen Bank

Account Name: KRISTIANI HUMANITAR
Account No. 8010004028

**IBAN AL39 2021 1013 0000 0080 1000 4028**
**SWIFT CODE: SGSBALTX**

Peace in our Lord’s Holy name,

Your sisters and brothers,

Board of the Lutheran and Moravian Church in Albania

_____________________________________________________

**Some video sequences from the disaster minutes here:**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kxj8RoaiPwY