**Lebanon Prayer News – January 2023**

Please keep on praying for Lebanon. We sadly have to report that things there continue to go from bad to worse. President Michel Aoun’s term of office expired at the end of October 2022 and can’t be renewed. There has to be a two-thirds majority in Parliament to elect a new President. The Parliament has met 10 times to vote for a new President, but without this critical majority being reached for any candidate. There has been extensive horse-trading between the various political factions within Lebanon as well as interference from abroad seeking to influence the process. Please pray for this deadlock to be broken.

Under the constitution a new Prime Minister and Government cannot be appointed in the absence of a sitting President. While this political paralysis continues mains electricity supply has gone down to 2 hours a day and the value of the Lebanese currency, the Lebanese Pound, continues to slide, although the rate of inflation has declined from its mid-2022 peak of over 200%. But its present rate of 142% is still making those paid in local currency poorer and poorer.

This makes the problem of unaffordability of home heating now that the cold winter weather has come severe. Temperatures get to sub-zero in the mountains and the Bekaa Valley (where 50% of the population are Syrian refugees).

To make matters worse, the formation of the new extreme-right wing Government in Israel has increased Hizbollah militancy in the south of the country.

The churches continue to do all they can within their limited resources to aid both struggling Lebanese citizens and Syrian refugees survive these difficult times. Please continue to pray for them not to grow weary in well-doing and to rise above the circumstances knowing the joy of Jesus in their hearts.

The predominant prayer of our Lebanese brothers and sisters faced with the continuing turmoil is ‘Lord, have mercy’.