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## Earthquake in Albania. Fr. Leuci (Caritas): “Remaining close to those who are suffering and rebuild together”

According to the Post Disaster Needs Assessment report (PDNA), presented past February 5 by **Bledi Cuci**, Minister in charge of post-quake efforts, the earthquake of November 26 2019 in Albania caused EUR 985 in damages. The report was drawn up by 90 international (ECB, EU and UN) and local experts who worked for over a month to complete it on time for the European Commission's Donor Conference in Brussels taking place today, 17 February. The PDNA report shows that "over 60,000 buildings were damaged, and over 200,000 people in 11 municipalities were affected by the consequences of the earthquake."



[Caritas' Emergency Appeal. From Brussels to Rome, where - also today - the seminar "Emergencies and humanitarian crises: the earthquake in Albania, the Libyan situation and the Balkan route" promoted by Caritas Italy, that brings together over 80 diocesan Caritas, is under way. The purpose of the meeting is to take stock of the emergency, relaunch "the animation of areas hit by the earthquake and jointly develop intervention and twinning initiatives and projects" within the framework of the "Emergency appeal."](#)



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said Fr. **Antonio Leuci**, director of Caritas Albania, present at the seminar. "EUR 985 million worth of damage is a huge amount for the country. Everything must be rebuilt.

The earthquake uncovered decades of unauthorized building.

Now the intention is to get off on the right foot, complying with regulations and monitoring the reconstruction process. I do hope that today's Donors' Conference in Brussels will initiate sustainable, controlled, transparent reconstruction devoid of violations, squandering, speculation and corruption. Donor countries must be involved in the monitoring process. The prime concern should be to

to restore homes and hope to those who have lost everything.

Many families don't even have memories to turn back to because the rubble of their houses was immediately removed, with no chance to recover what was left." Last January 31st Caritas Albania launched its "Emergency appeal", developed in conjunction with Caritas Italy, Caritas Europe and other Caritas from European countries such as Germany and Poland.

"We must turn our gaze to the needs of the poorest among the poor, to the peripheries where

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everything is missing, including people's dignity. We must remain close to the poor. The government will do its share, but our attention must always be focused on the peripheries. They must not be abandoned."

Instruments to concretize this commitment will include "the diocesan twinning of Italy and Albania that has borne many fruits in the past. We already have requests from many groups of young people and adults to travel to Albania next summer in order to help with the reconstruction of damaged houses with simple tasks such as electrical installations, plumbing and painting. My appeal to the Caritas of Italian dioceses is to come to Albania; I extend this appeal to humanitarian organizations. It's not only a matter of raising funds for reconstruction projects, but also to **express our spiritual and emotional closeness to the victims of the earthquake**, to show our support to those who are suffering."



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"The tremors can still be felt and it weakens people's hope."

"**The earthquake has increased the Albanian people's propensity to leave the Country precisely for lack of hope** - concluded Fr. Leuci - But thanks to the help of Italian Bishops (CEI) we will finance many projects developed by agencies and NGOs such as Vides, Vis, Missioni Rog, Avsi, to help women, children, unemployed and Roma people to **recover and restart their lives**."

Daniele Rocchi