

The President  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20500

February 10, 2021

Mr. President,

Verified facts present irrefutable arguments condemning the Assad regime and demonstrating that the regime cannot be considered a credible partner in the process of distributing international aid, contrary to the position taken by some churches and religious leaders in the letter from CSI-International to the US and French presidents (21 January 2021). Siding with the Assad regime and advocating for the removal of international sanctions under the guise of stopping the spread of COVID-19, they do not align themselves with the best interests of the Syrian people. It is important to note the absence among the signatories of most religious leaders who are outside the regime's sphere of influence, although they represent the largest Syrian denominations. Furthermore, many of those whose names were included said they asked for amendments in the text but their demands were not met.

The regime's many human rights violations, crimes against humanity and war crimes have been documented by a multitude of international organizations, including the United Nation's Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). OPCW has verified the use, on many occasions, of chemical weapons by the Syrian regime against Syrians. Additionally, the regime's systematic use of torture in its detention centers has been well documented and exposed through the CEASAR photographs, leading many nations to impose economic sanctions on entities and individual perpetrators of those violation, The senior security leaders, including Bashar Al Assad, have become wanted for justice before the European judiciary according to the global authority they have followed.

In a further attempt to break the will of its people and have them yield to its rule, the Assad regime has imposed an economic siege on them, through introduction of an "access card" by which the regime controls access to already sparsely available basic goods, such as bread and fuel. All the while, brand name luxury items and the newest cars remain a common sight amongst the regime's inner circles. International aid has not been spared from this blight either, as it has become a source of great profit for regional warlords and those closest to the regime. Multiple aid organizations have documented this, including, most recently, in the report submitted by the Norwegian Refugee Council (15/06/2020). The report clearly states that the root cause of the dire humanitarian situation in Syria is the abuse of the aid resources and not the lack of supply.

As well, the pandemic has been spreading more wildly and rapidly in regime areas than in others, a fact that speaks to the regime's irresponsibility towards its own people as it continues to ignore the recommendations for dealing with the pandemic.

Instead of lifting economic sanctions on criminal individuals from the Assad regime, the correct ethical position on this matter requires increasing the penalties to include all criminals against humanity and war criminals, discerning effective measures to help the Syrian people, and to end their suffering and the further deterioration of their safety, health and economic situations. This is precisely what we offer here, as Arab Christians and Syrian Christians. The suffering of the Syrian people can be alleviated through persuading the regime to accept the following:

- Allowing international aid organizations into Syria to take close supervision of the aid supply chain. This would eliminate the current corruption monopoly exercised by the "Red Crescent" and "Syria Trust For Development" which is run by Asma Al Assad, whose name is on the sanction list.

- Make efforts to return to the previous situation in which humanitarian aid was entering Syria through four border crossings before the Russian veto reduced it to two in order to enter aid for displaced Syrians outside the regime-held areas.

- Tie any assistance to the regime to uncovering the fate of the forcibly disappeared and releasing the detainees, and Allowing international organizations (red cross) to vaccinate those who are in the regime's detention camps and those most vulnerable to the disease (elderly and those with pre-existing conditions).

- Allowing international organizations to manage the COVID response as the regime has proven its failure repeatedly. A simple comparison between the regime's COVID-19 statistics and those of North East Syria demonstrates the drastic failure of the regime.

- The acceleration of the Syrian political solution in accordance with the UNSC Resolution #2254.

Those steps would set us on the right path towards guaranteeing the safety and equality of all Syrians. A path which would, in turn, support international peace and equality, which is of the utmost need in today's world as we face the many challenges that await humanity in the coming decades.

Respectfully,

Eng. Ayman **Abdel Nour**, Syria, President  
of the Syrian Christians for peace

Dr. Fares **Souhaid**, Lebanon, former deputy,  
founder and president of the Lebanese  
Center for Research and Studies Politica

Saad **Kiwan**, Lebanon, journalist and  
political writer

Dr. Samira **Moubayed**, Syria, researcher and  
academic, member of the Syrian  
Constitutional Committee for Civil Society

Antoine **El-Khoury Tawk**, Lebanon, writer  
Michel **Kilo**, Syria, writer, dissident

George **Sabra**, Syria, former president of the Syrian National Council

Tony **Habib**, Lebanon, engineer, Executive Director of the Lebanese Center for Research and Studies Politica

Hussein Ali **Ataya**, Lebanon, Coordinator of "Southerners for Freedom"

Assaad **Beshara**, Lebanon, political writer

Sana **El-Jacques**, Lebanon, journalist and political writer

Bahjat **Salameh**, Lebanon, lecturer at Kaslik University

Nehme **Mahfoud**, Lebanon, former head of teachers Syndicate

Elie **Hajj**, Lebanon, writer-journalist

Joseph **Karam**, Lebanon, General Director of the Lebanese Center for Research and Studies Politica

Rodrigue **Nawfal**, Lebanon, doctor, political activist, "The Rally for Sovereignty"

DR. Mona **Fayyad**, Lebanon, university lecturer and political writer

Atallah **Wehbe**, Lebanon, political activist

Antoine **Kassis**, Lebanon, engineer

Marwan **Muasher**, Jordan, former Minister of Foreign Affairs

Elie **Kyrillos**, Lebanon, lawyer

Hassan **Qotob**, Lebanon, Director of the Lebanese Center for Research and Consulting

Khalil **Toubiya**, Lebanon, consultant

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Nada **Saleh Anid**, Lebanon, writer and social activist

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Ahmed **Fatfat**, Lebanon, doctor and former deputy

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Dr. Dania **Khatib Koleilat**, Lebanon, Co-founder and president of Research Center for Cooperation and Peace Building

Joseph **Gebeily**, Lebanon, President Lebanese Information Center, Washington

Dr. Nibras el Fadel, Syria, based in Paris, Economic and Management Advisor to Multinational Companies and Organisations

Dr. Nael **Gerges**, Syria, researcher in the field of human rights

Marie Therese **Kiriaki**, Austria

Yako **Elish**, Iraqi activist, Paris, general secretary of the Association for Assistance to French Eastern Minorities

Nadim **Shehadeh**, Lebanon, President of the Lebanese American University - New York

Najib George **Awad**, Syria, professor of theology and Eastern Christian thought

Marcelle **Jouinatt**, Jordan, writer and Media Lecturer

Samir **Taqi**, Syria, doctor, General Director Research center ORC, Fellow at MEI-Washington

Wael **Aleji**, Syria, doctor, Secretary of the Association of Middle Eastern Conservatives, UK

Brooks **Newmark**, United Kingdom, Former Member of Parliament and Minister for Civil Society at UK Parliament

Michel **Shammas**, Syria, Human rights lawyer in Germany

\* The signatories are personally responsible for their signature and they do not bind the institution in which they work for any consequences.