

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington, D.C. 20500



Good Friday, April 18, 2014

Dear Mr. President,

I have just received the following alarming message from a besieged social worker in Aleppo, Syria. This courageous Christian, who chose to remain in Aleppo's war zone out of his sense of responsibility for the elderly, young children, and the physically and mentally handicapped, writes:

*"We are in a state of siege. The rebels are trying to enter the safe zone and are hitting us with rockets. There are explosions all over the city. The road towards the outside of the city is closed. The prices of food started jumping higher and nothing is entering the city. The situation has been getting worse for over two weeks: No telephone, no electricity, etc. Today, I have Internet access for the first time in many days. Despite the rockets more than 350 people were in church on Palm Sunday. But we are not sure if we will be able to worship in church on Good Friday or on Easter. May the Lord's will be done."*

This brave servant of the suffering Syrian people has been trapped in his neighborhood by U.S.-backed Islamist rebels since the summer of 2012 – a year after you announced your administration's commitment, in collaboration with its front-line Islamist allies, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey, to overthrow the Syrian government, an ally of Russia. These Islamist allies of the United States all have well-established records of religious intolerance, and it is well-known that their proxy forces in Syria are mainly jihadi extremists. The United States employed the same dangerous networks of Sunni extremists, among them Al Qaeda and the Taliban, to fight the Russians in Afghanistan in the 1980s – a policy that ultimately resulted in heightened jihadi terrorist activity, including the 9/11 attacks against the United States.

While the self-sacrificial social worker in Aleppo is a Christian, the death and destruction accompanying U.S. policy in Syria has visited members of all religious communities there, including Sunni and Shiite Muslims, Alawites and Druze.

For decades, Syria had been a regional safe haven for endangered religious communities. I was reminded of this reality earlier this month when I was in Iraq providing food parcels and children's clothing to nearly 70 families. They had recently been displaced by U.S.-backed rebels in Syria. Their forefathers had to flee Turkey during the anti-Christian genocide of 1915-1918, and found refuge in northern Iraq at the time of the British mandate. In 1933, they escaped the anti-Christian Simele massacres in post-independence Iraq, and were granted safe haven in Syria. Two generations lived in peace and were able to prosper in Syria, despite its heavy-handed, non-democratic system of government. But recently they were given a stark choice by Syrian rebels, a choice the religiously tolerant Assad regime never forced them to make: convert to Islam, pay the jihadis protection money, accept extermination, or depart from the region within 48 hours. These Christian families chose the latter, arriving exhausted and destitute as refugees in northern Iraq.

Just before my arrival in Iraq, I was again reminded of how the U.S.-backed Islamist rebellion is destroying Syria's longstanding tradition of religious peace. At the end of March, jihadi rebels, supported by our NATO ally Turkey, attacked and overran the predominantly Armenian Christian village of Kassab, near the Turkish border. The Armenians of Kassab were also descendants of the survivors of the anti-Christian genocide in Turkey one hundred years ago, and found safety in Syria. They have now been forced to seek security in other parts of Syria that are still controlled by the regime that your

administration is openly striving to overthrow. Their homes have been looted and their churches desecrated.

I could document many more such cases of how your administration's policy in Syria – far from promoting democracy and human rights – is consciously using radical anti-Christian Islamist proxies to install an Islamist Sunni regime in Syria that serves the interests of the United States' Islamist regional allies, first and foremost the religiously intolerant, totalitarian Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The grisly consequence of your administration's Syria policy every day becomes more apparent: 150,000 dead and over 6.5 million internally displaced, 2.6 million refugees in neighboring countries, and the transformation, through religious cleansing, of multi-religious, multi-cultural Syria into a religiously intolerant Sunni Islamist country. Moreover, despite the creation of these catastrophic conditions, your declared war goal – the overthrow of the Syrian government – has not been achieved. This catastrophe in Syria follows hard on the heels of the devastation of Iraq's dwindling Christian community as a by-product of President George W. Bush's regime change military campaign there, called Operation Iraqi Freedom.

It has not escaped our notice that, despite your public pronouncements of admiration for Pope Francis I's concern for the poor, a member of your staff anonymously reported to the media that you "had not had time" to share the Holy Father's concerns about religious persecution in the Middle East and other human rights issues with King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia during your meeting with him in Riyadh on the 28<sup>th</sup> of March. We also noted that an administration official informed the *Washington Post* just before your meeting with the Saudi monarch that the United States will increase its covert aid to Syria's rebels, including CIA-sponsored training. There is good reason to believe that the current siege of hitherto "safe" zones in Aleppo and the religious cleansing of Armenian Christians from Kassab is a result of this intensification of US covert operations.

This Good Friday, CSI urges you to meditate on the contemporary crucifixion of Christians and other endangered religious minorities in Syria and elsewhere in the Middle East. We furthermore implore you to raise belatedly Pope Francis I's concern about religious persecution with King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, Emir Tamim bin Hamad al Thani of Qatar and Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey, while insisting that these Islamist allies of the United States order their proxy military forces in Syria to observe a permanent cease-fire beginning this Easter Sunday, and enter into serious peace talks with their political opponents.

Finally, I appeal to you to inform the people of the United States just how many additional deaths and displacements, and what extent of violent religious persecution, you regard as justifiable collateral damage in the pursuit of the goal to deny Russia an ally in the Middle East by means of violent regime change.

Respectfully,



Dr. John Eibner  
CEO

