

Jesuits Speak Out on Syria, Condemn Terrorist Insurgency

By [Voltaire Network](#)

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We the Jesuit Provincials, as major superiors of the Society of Jesus in the Middle East and in Europe, warmly welcome the Holy Father's recent statement on Syria. With all his strength, he alerted international opinion to the Syrian tragedy and asked "all the parties in conflict to listen to the voice of their own conscience and not close themselves in solely on their own interests".


With him, we also declare that "never has the use of violence brought peace in its wake", but that the only way to peace is through the culture of encounter and the culture of dialogue.




Steps toward peace

Therefore, we rejoice that the threat of air attacks against Syria has ceased and we support the launching of the process which aims at the destruction of all chemical weapons found on Syrian soil. We welcome negotiations for a peace conference for Syria which have now begun and we urge that this peace process moves forward rapidly, courageously and firmly. We ask all parties in the conflict, as well as the international community,

 to urgently seek a cease-fire guaranteed by an international authority;

 to establish a road-map to prepare the meeting of all the parties in conflict;

 to convene the peace conference to reach a common agreement which safeguards the lives of the Syrian people.

Social and civil mobilization

At the same time, we call once again for mobilization of all civil and social agencies to help the Syrian people face one of the biggest humanitarian tragedies of our century. The care of refugees both within and outside the country (about one quarter of the population), the need for food, medicine and medical aid, freeing detainees and hostages, and the reopening of educational institutions, continue to be urgent needs.

Interests at play

We also wish to draw attention to the necessity of acknowledging and naming the real interests that are at play, both locally, regionally or internationally, and which, unfortunately, do not always correspond with the interests of the Syrian people. In particular, we call for a reflection on the consequences of the production and sale of arms; we call for the cessation of the delivery and the sale of arms to all parties in conflict.

Necessary discernment

We would like to urge the wider international community, to refuse all support, whether diplomatic or military, for every party, which openly advocates any forms of violence, fanaticism or extremism. Respect for the dignity of the person as well as for human rights should constitute a criterion and a preliminary primary point of reference for all material aid.

Christian communities in Syria

Finally, we point particularly to the future of Christian communities living in Syria. Present in Syria since the beginning of the Christian era, these communities constitute an inseparable element of its social fabric and its cultural richness and they contribute actively to its development. Solutions advocating the exile or the elimination of these communities are unacceptable. We want to encourage those Christian communities and to assure them that they can play a valuable role in their societies through faithful witness to the Gospel: a gospel that calls for peace, justice, forgiveness, understanding and reconciliation.

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