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## Statement for Geneva 2 talks on Syria

**"An urgent call to action for a just peace in Syria" - statement from the WCC Ecumenical Consultation on Syria, held 15-17 January 2014, at the Ecumenical Centre to be presented at the Geneva 2 talks on Syria.**

17 January 2014

### **An urgent call to action for a just peace in Syria**

**WCC Ecumenical Consultation on Syria  
Ecumenical Centre – Geneva 15-17 January 2014**

Church leaders and representatives from Syria, the Middle East Council of Churches, the World Council of Churches and the Holy See<sup>[1]</sup> gathered in Geneva from 15–17 January 2014 for a consultation to address the forthcoming Geneva II peace conference on Syria.

Christians have maintained a continuous presence in the land of Syria since the dawn of Christianity. Today, as churches and church-related humanitarian agencies, we are present with the people of Syria on a daily basis both inside the country and amongst refugees. In this communication, we seek to raise their voice.

Our concern is for all people affected by the indiscriminate violence and humanitarian calamity in Syria. Innocent children, women and men are being killed, wounded, traumatized and driven from their homes in uncounted numbers. We hear their cries, knowing that when “one member suffers, all suffer together with it” (1 Corinthians 12:26).

There will be no military solution to the crisis in the country. Endeavouring to be faithful to God’s love of all human beings, and within the context of international humanitarian law, we submit these calls for action and guidelines for building peace.

We call upon you, as participants in the Geneva II conference, to:

1. pursue an immediate cessation of all armed confrontation and hostility within Syria. We call for all parties to the conflict to release detained and kidnapped persons. We urge the UN Security Council to implement measures ending the flow of weapons and foreign fighters into Syria.
2. ensure that all vulnerable communities in Syria and refugees in neighbouring countries receive appropriate humanitarian assistance. Where such large populations are at serious risk, full humanitarian access is essential in compliance with international law and the Responsibility to Protect.

3. develop a comprehensive and inclusive process toward establishing a just peace and rebuilding Syria. All sectors of society (including government, opposition and civil society) need to be included in a Syrian solution for the Syrian people. We recognize the urgent need to integrate women and young people fully in these processes.

Geneva II must be transformed into a peace-building process, responding to the legitimate aspirations of all Syrian people. We offer these guidelines:

- Any peace-building process must be Syrian-led. It should be transparent and credible so Syrians may determine their country's future. Such a process requires the support of the Arab League, the United Nations and the constructive engagement of all parties involved in the current crisis.
- All efforts must be made to secure the peace, territorial integrity and independence of Syria.
- The multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-confessional nature and tradition of Syrian society must be preserved. The vibrant mosaic of Syrian society entails equal rights for all of its citizens. The human rights, dignity and religious freedom for all must be promoted and protected in accordance with international norms.

As Christians we speak with one voice in calling for a just peace in Syria. To achieve this peace, we are committed to working hand-in-hand with Muslim sisters and brothers, with whom we share a common history along with spiritual and social values. We seek to work for national reconciliation and healing through building trust.

“Blessed are the peacemakers” (Matthew 5:9).

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[1] Participants came from the following countries: France, Germany, Italy, Iran, Lebanon, the Netherlands, Norway, Russia, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States. Ecumenical partners included the ACT Alliance, the Community of Sant'Egidio, the Lutheran World Federation, Pax Christi International, Religions for Peace and the World Student Christian Federation.