



**Urgent Appeal**  
**From the Supreme Council**  
**of the Evangelical Community in Syria and Lebanon<sup>1</sup>**  
**To all the Evangelical and Protestant Churches and Organizations**  
**Across the World**

1. We, the leaders of Evangelical and Protestant churches and organizations affiliated to the Supreme Council of the Evangelical Community in Syria and Lebanon, have met together at this critical juncture of our history in order to reflect on the current situation, and on the tragic events that our people in Iraq, Syria and Lebanon are passing through. We are most concerned over the great human suffering and political difficulties that our people in these countries are facing. We have deeply reflected upon this deteriorating state of affairs, and have been greatly disturbed and shocked by the ugly incidents of violence that innocent civilians and entire communities, especially Christian, have been subjected to.
2. We also write to you in solidarity with the various appeals and statements that have been issued by the leaders of our sister Eastern Churches, as well as by some Islamic groups, concerning the recent development of events in Iraq; and especially the forced displacement and murderous killings of individuals and groups by the so-called *Islamic State in Iraq and Syria* (ISIS), killings that verge on being a bona fide genocide.<sup>2</sup>
3. We are also mindful of the catastrophic consequences of the bloody conflict that has plagued Syria for three years now. We are horrified by the amount of death, destruction and ongoing displacement that has ravaged vast sectors of the Syrian society and population, including Christians, in all parts of the country.
4. Neither do we forget the recent violent eruptions and grave breaches of security that have occurred in Lebanon; incidents that have left a large number of victims. The most serious of these is the ongoing violent conflict in the town of Ersal (north-east of the country). This is notwithstanding the grave consequences of the huge influx of Syrian and Iraqi refugees as well as the threat to attack churches in certain regions.
5. In view of all this, we are issuing this urgent appeal to inform you that the above-mentioned factors, among others, have rendered the existential threat

<sup>1</sup> The Supreme Council is the highest representative body of all the Evangelical and Protestant denominations in Syria and Lebanon.

<sup>2</sup> See for example: the statements by the Chaldean Patriarch Sako of Baghdad (Aug. 7, 2014) and that of the meeting of Eastern Patriarchs at Diman, Lebanon (Aug. 7, 2014); as well as those of the *Arab Group for Christian Muslim Dialogue* (July 23, 2014) and the *International Congress of Islamic Scholars* (July 23, 2014).



facing the future of Middle Eastern minorities, as well as moderate Muslim majorities in the region, a very real danger.

6. For us, this is a moment filled with awe and fear! Thus we move to announce a “state of emergency” in order to preserve what remains of the Christian – and moderate non-Christian – presence in the East, and to circumvent its complete demise.
7. The issue of Christian presence in the Middle East has gone beyond the stage of calling for equal rights and protection from persecution. It has become a cry of warning before further events cause the annihilation of Christian presence in the Middle East.
8. Accordingly, and in view of our awareness of the dangers of the present crisis, and in compassion with the sufferings and tragedies our peoples are facing, we urge our partners in ministry, being the entire community of Evangelical and Protestant Churches across the world, as well as all their social and humanitarian organizations, to act as soon as possible in order to:  
**First:** Quickly urge governments and decision makers in your countries to
  - a) Raise the awareness of all to the immanent dangers of the situation.
  - b) Act immediately to stop the depletion, as well as the forced and ordered displacement of individuals and communities from their homelands, under the threat of arms.
  - c) Work for a long term strategy aimed at putting an end to the phenomena of cruel violence and indiscriminate murder, as well as the ejection of individuals and peoples from the Middle East. The long-standing and historic fabric of peaceful communal living between the various social components of the Middle East is fast eroding. It desperately needs to be halted.
9. We grab this opportunity to urge the Evangelical and Protestant churches all over the world, as well as their social and humanitarian organizations, to exercise the maximum pressure, moral and otherwise, and to tap all the resources at their disposal, in order to ensure that the moral values and human principles of their societies and countries prevail over political and temporal interests. We believe that you, our partners, are able to, and should, engage yourselves in this respect. This is especially important with regard to halting the flow of finances and arms to the “takfiri” and radical groups. We urge you to influence these governments in order to put pressure on the international and regional powers that support these radicals.
10. **Second:** A well-thought out strategy needs to be put in place in order to support Christian presence in the East, as well as the presence of other moderate components in the region. This is necessary so that these communities may continue to be agents of spreading the culture of love, peace



and human rights, as well as intellectual, educational and religious pluralism. This has been, and must continue to be, achieved through the strengthening of educational and social institutions that have, and continue to contribute vigorously to the rejection of radicalism and violence, as well as reinforcement of the values of justice, peace, and respectful acceptance for the different other.

11. **Third:** Humanitarian aid to victims of the ongoing violence is urgently needed. We urge our partners to offer food and water supplies, as well as medical and other forms of assistance, to the war victims, and to support those who have been forcefully displaced in their own homeland, or become refugees in neighboring countries, so they may safely return to their towns, villages and churches.<sup>3</sup>
12. Divine love, incarnate on the cross, causes in us deep sadness and moves us to prayer. It is this same love that urges us to send this appeal, and to work on behalf of those who have been tortured, kidnapped and rendered homeless, as well as for the families of those who were killed or murdered in the absurd wars in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and other countries of our region. We must work together to heal the wounds and to preserve what is left of the Christian community in those lands. We also must work towards strengthening our sustainable joint communal living with our Muslim brothers and sisters in spite of the widening confessional conflicts and the ever-growing cycle of senseless violence.
13. Our hope is that you act swiftly before it is too late. You are indeed our partners in faith, and partnership in Christianity is based on solidarity and fellowship, and on supporting each other faithfully and sincerely, for the sake of a common Christian witness, and in obedience to the commandments of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Beirut, Lebanon  
29 August, 2014

Rev. Dr. Salim Sahiouny, President  
Supreme Council of the Evangelical  
Community in Syria and Lebanon

Rev. Megrđitch Karagoezian, General Sec.  
Supreme Council of the Evangelical  
Community in Syria and Lebanon  
President, Union of Armenian Evangelical  
Churches in the Near East

Rev. Samuel Hanna, Vice President  
Supreme Council of the Evangelical  
Community in Syria and Lebanon

Rev. Dr. Habib Badr, Senior Pastor  
National Evangelical Church of Beirut

<sup>3</sup> To inquire about ways of support, kindly contact the Supreme Council at the address below



Rev. Charles Costa,  
Exec. Comm. member  
Pastor, Baptist Evangelical Church of Ras Beirut

Dr. Basem Shab  
Exec. Comm. Member  
Representative of the Evangelical Community  
Member of the Lebanese Parliament

Rev. Sami Dagher,  
Exec. Comm. Member  
Vice president, Evangelical Christian  
Alliance Church in Syria and Lebanon

Rev. Salim Sabounji, Pastor  
Exec. Comm. Member  
Syriac Evangelical Church of Lebanon

Rev. Andrew Salameh, District Superintendent  
Nazarean Evangelical Church of Lebanon

Rev. Edward Awabdeh, President  
Evangelical Christian Alliance Church  
In Syria and Lebanon

Brother Fuad Al Masri, President  
National Evangelical Church of Bludan, Syria

Mr. Tony Manasseh, Stated Clerk  
Friends (Quakers) Community, Lebanon

Mr. Jean Dagher  
Exec. Comm. Member, Finance Secretary  
Supreme Council of the Evang. Community  
In Syria and Lebanon

Rev. Imad Zoorob,  
Exec. Comm. Member  
Pastor, All Saints Episcopal Church, Beirut  
Rev. Jonas Weiss-Lange, Pastor  
German Speaking Evangelical Church in Beirut

Dr. Elie Haddad, President  
Arab Baptist Theological Seminary,  
Mt. Lebanon

Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian, President  
Haigazian University, Beirut

Rev. Fadi Dagher, General Secretary  
National Evangelical Presbyterian  
Synod of Syria and Lebanon

Rev. Said (Joy) Mallouh, President  
Exec. Comm. Member  
Assembly of the Church of God  
In Syria and Lebanon

Rev. Levon Maksoudian,  
Exec. Comm. Member  
President, Seventh Day Adventist  
Church, Lebanon

Rev. Joseph Kazzi, President  
Evangelical Baptist Convention in  
Lebanon

Rev. Daas Haddad, President  
Evangelical Baptist Union of Syria

Rev. Joseph Najem, President  
Free Evangelical Church  
In Syria and Lebanon

Brother Elias Saqr, General Secretary  
Brethren Evangelical Church of Lebanon

Rev. Joseph Kassab, President  
Lebanese Evangelical Society

Judge Fawzi Dagher  
Exec. Comm. Member  
Legal Consultant of the Supreme Council  
Of the Evang. Community in Lebanon

Dr. Nabil Costa, General Secretary  
The League of Evangelical Schools  
In Lebanon  
Rev. Pierre Lacoste, Pastor  
French Speaking Evang. Church in Beirut

Dr. Leif Hongisto, President  
Middle East (Adventist) University,  
Mt. Lebanon

Dr. George Sabra, President  
Near East School of Theology, Beirut