



DIALOGUE IS THE ONLY WAY TOWARDS AN END OF THE VIOLENCE IN SYRIA

Pax Christi International is deeply concerned about the latest events in Syria.

While we unequivocally condemn the use of chemical weapons, regardless of who perpetrated the attack, Pax Christi pleads with the nations of the world to recognize the responsibility and authority of the UN Security Council to address this egregious violation of international law and morality and to work with the United Nations to protect - without escalating the violence - the Syrian people. This should be done through urgent diplomatic efforts to stop immediately the flow of arms to both sides and to all militant groups and to bring all stakeholders in the conflict to the negotiating table. Many states have helped fuel the armed conflict in Syria by sending weapons to the region; now it is time for the International community to cooperate fully on an arms embargo and to unequivocally back dialogue that alone can end the horrific violence.

As part of the political solution, serious consideration should be given to deploying an unarmed or minimally armed multinational police force to Syria to begin to secure zones of non-violence in support of Syrians committed to peace. We also invite Pope Francis to join with Christian, Muslim, and other faith leaders from around the world and from all traditions to assemble a peace force of faith and send it to accompany the Syrian people through this time of great danger and suffering.

Pax Christi urgently calls religious leaders - regardless of the specific community to which they belong - to use their moral authority to speak clearly and with urgency in private and in public for an end to violence; to strongly call for a political solution to the armed conflict; to support the creation of zones of non-violence; and to promote active campaigns of prayer, non-cooperation and public witness for an immediate end to the violence in Syria.

Pax Christi International also expresses its deepest solidarity with the people of Syria. We pray for all who remain in Syria, for those who have fled the country, for all who have lost loved ones, for all who live in terrible fear for the future and, in a special way, for those courageous peacemakers who have resisted violence and who have tried to work for positive change in nonviolent ways.

Brussels, 29 August 2013