

27 August 2016

To M. JAN FIGEL

Special Envoy for the promotion of freedom of religion or belief outside the EU

Your Excellency,

In the context of the current situation in the Middle East, we, Patriarchs and Bishops from Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan and Palestine are grateful and thankful for the concerns manifested in favor of persecuted people suffering violation of their freedom of conscience, political opinion, freedom of expression, religion or belief and their daily painful consequences.

We would kindly request further consideration and commitment from the European Union in the light of the plight endured daily by our people.

At Short term,


- stop war, weapons business, as well as combattants stream
- bring to Justice criminals from ISIS
- cooperate with International Community, Middle East and Regional concerned countries to find out political solution, including reciprocity principle and separation of Religion and State,
- organise and promote meetings between religious leaders.

As you know, humanitarian assistance, including the one provided by faith-based organisations, and help for community needs, is more necessary than ever within countries of conflicts (displaced people in camps, as well as in homes and cities) as well as within countries which welcome people who seek refuge (neighbour countries as well as in Europe).


From now on, and in post-conflict, long term, perspective, stronger Cooperation with the European Union is also needed in our countries:

- Assistance to the return of refugees in their homeland
- Securitisation of former conflict zones
- Reconstruction of Infrastructures (roads, villages, hospitals, churches, schools etc)
- Revitalisation of Cultural and religious heritage and patrimony
- Support of Education and human development (basic schooling, High School and Universities programmes)
- Support for Basic health and social needs and services


We are thankful to President Jean Claude Juncker who has taken seriously our deep concern in appointing your Excellency as Special Envoy and we would be grateful if you could set up further conditions for better collaboration in the above fields of concerns.




His Beatitude Moran Mör Bechara Boutros Al-Rahi
Cardinal Patriarch of Antioch and All the East of the Maronites



His Holiness Moran Mor Ignatius Aphrem II
Patriarch of Antioch and All the East and Supreme Leader of the Universal Syriac Orthodox Church




His Beatitude Moran Mor Ignatius Joseph III Younan
Patriarch of Antioch and All the East of the Syriac Catholic Church



His Beatitude Fouad Twal
Archbishop Patriarch of Jerusalem of the Latins (em.)



His Excellency Bishop Anba Gabriel
*Bishop of the diocese of Austria of the Coptic Orthodox Church
Official representative of His Holiness Tawadros II, Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of St Mark*



His Excellency Archbishop Jean-Clement Jeanbart
*Archbishop of Aleppo
Official representative of His Beatitude Gregory III Laham, Patriarch of Antioch and All the East and Alexandria and Jerusalem for the Melchite Catholic Church*