



The President of the Russian Federation

C/o: Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation
to the United Nations Office in Geneva
Avenue de la Paix 15
1202 Geneva, Switzerland

June 15, 2021

Mr. President – Put the Syrian people first!

Dear Mr. President,

We commend you for your willingness to meet with President Joe Biden in Geneva this week. Although there are many issues that divide the United States and Russia, it is essential that your two nations find a way to cooperate for the sake of peace and security, especially in the Middle East.

It is well known that Syria will be on the agenda for your meeting Wednesday. This issue has, quite truly, never been more urgent. Although violence has greatly decreased in Syria over the past few years, there are more Syrians who are hungry, impoverished, and lacking essential services today than ever before. According to the World Food Programme, the threat of unprecedented starvation is very real, with 4.5 million more Syrians having slipped into food insecurity during the past year. Over half the population is dependent on aid to survive; over 90% live in poverty. 600,000 Syrian children are malnourished. One third of Syria's population has already left the country, and the humanitarian situation will further push Syrians to seek refuge outside.

Both you and Mr. Biden have tools at your disposal to alleviate this crisis. Mr. Biden can and should lift, suspend, or greatly reduce the draconian comprehensive sanctions the United States has placed on Syria, and advise his European partners to do the same. We have written to Mr. Biden separately, urging him to take this step.

You, on the other hand, can agree to re-authorize the United Nations to ship humanitarian aid across the border into opposition-held territory, especially Idlib province, where over three million Syrians now live, the vast majority of whom are destitute displaced people who depend on this aid to survive.

Powerful voices in the U.S. press and in Congress are encouraging President Biden not to cooperate with you to resolve these issues, to hold out until he can get some geopolitical victory in exchange for ending the sanctions. We urge him to ignore these voices, and we likewise urge you to ignore any voices from within your country encouraging you not to cooperate for the benefit of the Syrian people. Syrians should not be treated as bartering chips for the Great Powers. Threatening Syrians with starvation as a negotiating tactic is obscene and is contrary to the Geneva Convention's prohibition on the collective punishment of civilian populations.

Christian Solidarity International
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Together, we urge you and Mr. Biden, in the spirit of the Geneva Conventions, to mutually pledge to help Syria's long-suffering population, by lifting the economic sanctions on Syria, and assuring the delivery of humanitarian aid to all areas of the country.

Most Respectfully,



Dr. John Eibner
International President
Christian Solidarity International



The Baroness Cox of Queensbury
Independent Member of the House of Lords
CEO, Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART)



Humanitarian
Aid Relief Trust