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Bismillah ar-rahman ar-raheem

Joint Statement on Syria by Islamic Human Rights Commission and Citizens International

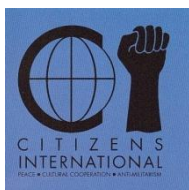
IHRC and CI are and have been deeply concerned about the never-ending spiral of violence and killing in Syria. People have been killed and continue to die in their tens of thousands, at least 2.5 million are internally displaced, hundreds of thousands are refugees, and the most horrendous acts of sexual violence, desecration and abuse have become commonplace with sectarian narratives driving a zero sum attitude on all sides.

Whatever the original motivations of any side in what is now a civil war, it is clear that this conflict has served primarily the interests of those who seek a weakened and divided Syria. The time for discussing whether or not any struggle is legitimate if there is no external intervention is over. External intervention has been present from the outset of violence.

IHRC and CI believe that the only way forward is an immediate cessation of hostilities and a negotiated settlement. Anything else simply furthers external imperialist agendas – whatever the rights and wrongs of what has happened in the last two years. It was upon this same basis that we opposed a war in Iraq in 2002.

We further believe that the hyping up of sectarian sentiment by ulema and activists is reprehensible and has been conducive to the perpetration and justification of heinous acts not only in Syria but in other countries. Those who hold responsible positions must make immediate amends for any such statements. In hyping up belligerent attitudes dressed up in Islamic terminology, they have led the ummah down a false path of internecine hatred and destruction. Just as there must eventually be a process to find justice for the victims of violence at the hands of warring sides in Syria, so too must there be a process of accountability for the statements made by supporters of all sides.

We face many years, if not generations, of restorative justice over what has happened in Syria and beyond. We must start this process now before even more damage is done.



Citizens International
No. 10 Jalan Masjid Negeri, 11600 Penang, Malaysia
Telephone/Fax: (6) 04 828 4648
Email: ci@citz.org
Web: www.citz.org



Islamic Human Rights Commission
PO Box 598, Wembley, London, UK, HA9 7XH
Telephone (+44) 20 8904 4222
E-mail: info@ihrc.org
Web: www.ihrc.org