



The President of the United States

C/o: United States Mission
11, Route de Pregny
1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland

June 15, 2021

Mr. President – Put the Syrian people first!

Dear Mr. President,

We commend you for taking the step to meet in person with President Vladimir Putin 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. Putin have tools at your disposal to alleviate this crisis. Mr. Putin can agree to re-authorize the United Nations to ship humanitarian aid across the border into opposition-held territory. We have written to Mr. Putin separately, urging him to take this step.

You, on the other hand, can lift, suspend, or greatly reduce the draconian comprehensive sanctions the United States has placed on Syria, and advise your European partners to do the same. These sanctions have contributed to skyrocketing food prices and massive shortages of fuel, which is needed to ship food, generate electricity, and power irrigation systems, among other vital functions.

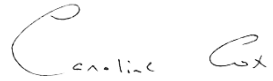
Powerful voices in the U.S. press and in Congress are encouraging you not to cooperate with President Putin to take these steps, to hold out until you can get some geopolitical victory in exchange for ending the sanctions. We urge you to ignore these voices. Syrians should not be treated as bartering 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.

Together, we urge you and Mr. Putin, 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