

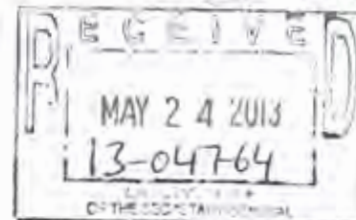
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**An appeal to the Hon. Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, of
the United Nations, for securing the release of the two
abducted Orthodox Christian Archbishops in Syria.**

Sir,

Many Christians, who historically experienced a higher degree of freedom in Syria than in many other countries in the region, are going through the worst time in their lives. They are squeezed between the rebel forces with their extremist Islamist ideology and the government forces.

These Christians are faced with a disaster that has lead them to question whether they will be able to survive in that country. Two prominent Orthodox Christian Bishops, Archbishop Paul Yazigi and Archbishop Youhanna Ibrahim were abducted by armed rebels on April 23, 2013 in the suburbs of Aleppo, Syria. According to reports the driver of the Archbishops was murdered first and the Archbishops were forced by the rebels to go to an unknown location, possibly in either Syria or Turkey.

The Christian community around the world is horrified by this event. We continue to pray for the safety of our Bishops and our people in Syria.

Understandably thousands of Christian families have fled the country, and many more are looking for an escape route. It is feared that the war could result in the eradication, from Syria, of the Christian presence, which dates back to the times of the apostles and the early church. We are also concerned about the fate of other minorities including the Alawites in Syria.

We would like to highlight the frustration expressed by world leaders and organizations, as appeared in the media worldwide:

"The next genocide in the world will likely be against the Alawites in Syria." --The chilling prediction made by Ambassador Peter W. Galbraith (New York Times)

"The position of Christians in the region [the Middle East] is more vulnerable than it has been for centuries." --Former Archbishop of Canterbury The Rt. Hon. Dr. Rowan Williams

Christianity is "the most persecuted religion worldwide." -- Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany,

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"We cannot accept and thereby facilitate what looks more and more like a particularly perverse program of cleansing in the Middle East, religious cleansing." –Former French President Nicholas Sarkozy.

"Growing numbers of foreign Sunni extremist fighters are battling not just to rid Syria of Mr. Assad, but to religiously cleanse it." –Simon Adam, Executive Director of the Global Center for the Responsibility to Protect

"Massacres are taking place for no reason and without any justification against Christians. It is only because they are Christians. What is happening to Christians is a genocide." –Former Lebanese President Amine Gemayal

"We are facing religious cleansing in parts of the Middle East." –John Patten, Member of the House of Lords
"The Commission has received credible reports of anti-Government armed groups attacking Alawites and other pro-Government minority communities [in Syria]. ...Entire communities are at risk of being forced out of [Syria] or of being killed inside the country." –UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic

We, the members of the Indian Christian Community in North America, are hereby appealing to your high office to personally monitor the situation in Syria. We also request your office to urgently seek the help of all member nations for securing the release of the Archbishops abducted in Syria.

Respectfully Submitted,

Indian Christian Forum, Inc.

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PRAY FOR THE BISHOPS KIDNAPPED IN SYRIA

Pray for the safety of the Orthodox Christian
Bishops H.E. Mor Gregorios Yuhanna Ibrahim
and Metropolitan Bolous Yazejy

