



EMN European Office

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European Muslim Network - because Europe matters!

The European Muslim Network's press release on the current situation in Aleppo and Syria.

The sufferings of the people of Aleppo and the massive bombardment and destruction of the city make us speechless. The images reaching us from Aleppo remind us of the images of the Second World War that we have seen in books of history. Aleppo is bleeding to its death. The people of Aleppo, indeed the people of Syria are tired, they want peace, and they want an end to the conflict in their homeland. Only the extremists and some warlords benefit from the continuation of the ghastly war in Syria.

The people of Aleppo are in dire need of a lasting ceasefire. Unfortunately the Syrian regime is pressing ahead with its gruesome military action against Aleppo. With the excuse that it is fighting against terrorism countless civilians have lost their lives, their property, and their future, while the so called international community remains passive. A scared Europe shaken by terrorist attacks in the recent past remains idle in the case of Aleppo and it creates the impression that it is buying the argument of the Assad regime to be a bulwark against terrorism. But in Aleppo crimes against humanity are committed against the people of Syria.

The European Muslim Network based in Brussels appeals to all sides involved in the war in Syria to assume responsibility for the suffering humanity of Aleppo.

We demand,

- That Russia and Iran exert massive pressure on the Assad-regime to stop the onslaught on Aleppo immediately.

- That the United States, the Gulf States and Turkey exert pressure on the opposition to the Assad-regime to stop their activities which are abused by the Assad regime as a pretext for their war against the people of Aleppo.

For the sake of the people of Aleppo, for the sake of peace in Syria both sides need to make fundamental concessions.

Both sides have to face the fact that the continuation of war will not produce an ultimate winner of the war in Syria. All Syrians are losing in this war. After five years of war, devastation and immense sufferings it is without a doubt difficult for Syrians to negotiate with the enemy. But history teaches us that those who want peace must negotiate with their worst enemies. Or drown in a sea of blood in a horrible war. Syria will then be reduced to a heap of rubble and a land of graveyards. Almost half a million of Syrians are dead, millions have been displaced internally or become refugees. How many more people have to die before reason silences the guns in Syria?

The destruction in the contested areas of Aleppo is indescribable. The EU claims to be a community of values. This is something we hear from politicians almost every day, and the values the EU is founded on are European values. But is that truly the case when it comes to Aleppo? The European Union must play a central, substantial and mediating role in this conflict when its claim as a community of values is to be more than an empty speech bubble. The Syrian war affects Europe in the first place and the steady influx of desperate refugees is only one proof for this simple insight.

The powers involved in the Syrian tragedy are at fault for the bloodshed. Their guilt in the devastation of the country and the annihilation of its people may be even more than that of the Syrian people. They could bring this senseless war, which is in reality a proxy war between Saudi Arabia and Iran as well as between the USA and Russia, to an end tomorrow. But their reprehensible interests in the Middle East are obviously more important to them than the valuable lives of the Syrian people. This war of proxy has to come to an end now, if values in politics are to have a meaning in the future. Aleppo is another sad highlight of the Syrian tragedy. And it is another sad highlight for Europe's current inability and lack of will to assume responsibility in a globalized world.

If Europe wants to be a beacon of hope it has to rediscover its original values. By applying itself to the challenge of bringing about a lasting peace for the people of Aleppo and Syria, the European Union will not only rediscover its original peace-building abilities, it will also fill the currently endangered unique European project with new life.

Aleppo and the conflict in Syria in general is a testing case for Europe's self-image. Will Europe respond to the smell of death and the loud cries of the injured reaching us from Aleppo? Will Europe accept its obligation to act for the sake of humanity? Or will it once again dodge the role of a value-oriented, honest peace broker in world politics?

Board of directors

European Muslim Network (EMN)

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