



CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF ENGLAND AND WALES

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Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP
Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
London
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28 November 2016

Dear Secretary of State,

I am writing in my capacity as Chair of the Catholic Bishops' Conference International Affairs Department, to strongly reiterate Pope Francis' appeal for the protection of civilians in Syria.

In the years since peaceful protests against an authoritarian regime descended into full scale civil war, we have witnessed the most grievous violations of human dignity including the use of siege, chemical weapons and indiscriminate bombings. The slaughter unfolding in Eastern Aleppo now presents a new level of violence and suffering which the entire international community has a duty to prevent.

Our concern is for every civilian affected by these atrocities. At this critical time I urge you to exert all of the UK's diplomatic influence in establishing no fly zones, safe passage for humanitarian relief and ultimately a complete cessation of hostilities. While there are clearly immense political challenges in addressing this crisis, our common humanity compels us to act.

With my thoughts and prayers,

Yours sincerely,

Rt Rev Declan Lang
Chair of the Bishops Catholic Conference
International Affairs Department