Syriensanktionen – kirchliche Initiative

Brief an den Präsidenten der USA

Vor zehn Jahren war Syrien der Brotkorb der Region. Heute steht Syrien nach Angaben des Welternährungsprogramms der Vereinten Nationen (WFP) nicht nur am Rande des Hungers, sondern des Verhungerns.



9. März 2021 ·

Ohne Umschweife wenden wir uns an Sie, um von Ihnen eine dringende Antwort auf die schwere humanitäre Krise in Syrien zu erbitten. Prof. Alena Douhan, Sonderberichterstatterin der Vereinten Nationen zu den negativen Auswirkungen der einseitigen Zwangsmaßnahmen, rief die Vereinigten Staaten Ende Dezember auf, ihre komplexen Wirtschaftssanktionen aufzuheben, die der Bevölkerung Syriens schweren Schaden zufügen.

Die Sonderberichterstatterin stellte fest, dass die US-Sanktionen „die Menschenrechte der syrischen Bevölkerung verletzen“ und „die bereits schreckliche humanitäre Situation in Syrien, besonders im Verlauf der COVID-19-Pandemie, verschärfen“, indem sie Nothilfe, Handel und Investitionen verhindern, die notwendig sind für das Funktionieren des syrischen Gesundheitssystems und der Wirtschaft.

Die Ergebnisse der Sonderberichterstatterin spiegeln den wachsenden Konsens innerhalb der Gemeinschaft der Hilfs- und Menschenrechtsorganisationen wider, der besagt, dass diese Form der kollektiven Bestrafung der Zivilbevölkerung Syrien in eine noch nie dagewesene humanitäre Katastrophe führt.

Vor zehn Jahren war Syrien der Brotkorb der Region. Heute steht Syrien nach Angaben des Welternährungsprogramms der Vereinten Nationen (WFP) nicht nur am Rande des Hungers, sondern des Verhungerns. Im vergangenen Juni warnte der Exekutivdirektor des WFP, der frühere Gouverneur David Beasley, dass die Hälfte aller Syrer hungrig zu Bett geht, und dass sich das Land am Rande einer „großen Hungersnot“ befindet. Inzwischen tobt in Syrien die COVID-19-Pandemie, der das in zehn Kriegsjahren weitgehend zerstörte Gesundheitssystem nichts entgegenzusetzen hat.

Millionen von bedrängten Syrern werden heute hungrig und frierend zu Bett gehen. Von den USA verhängte einseitige Zwangsmaßnahmen verschlimmern die Wirtschaftsmisere der syrischen Bevölkerung.

Wir bitten Sie eindringlich, Herr Präsident, durch die Umsetzung der Empfehlung der UN-Sonderberichterstatterin den Syrern zu helfen, jene humanitäre Krise zu beheben, die eine neue Welle der Instabilität im Mittleren Osten und darüber hinaus mit sich bringen kann.

Wir sind überzeugt, dass die legitimen nationalen Interessen der Vereinigten Staaten erreicht werden können, ohne die Bevölkerung Syriens gemeinschaftlich durch Wirtschaftssanktionen zu bestrafen.

Hochachtungsvoll,

The President January 21, 2021

The White House

1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.

Washington, DC 20500

Mr. President, We extend to you our congratulations upon your inauguration as the 46th President of the United States.

We wish to lose no time approaching you for an urgent response to the severe humanitarian crisis in Syria. The UN Special Rapporteur on Unilateral Coercive Measures, Prof. Alena Douhan, appealed at the end of December for the United States to lift its complex web of economic sanctions that severely harm the people of Syria.

The Special Rapporteur stated that that these U.S. sanctions “violate the human rights of the Syrian people” and “exacerbate the already dire humanitarian situation in Syria, especially in the course of COVID-19 pandemic”, by blocking the aid, trade and investment necessary for Syria’s health system and economy to function.

The Special Rapporteur’s findings reflect a growing consensus in the humanitarian aid and human rights communities that this form of collective punishment of the civilian population is driving Syria into an unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe.

Ten years ago, Syria was a breadbasket for the region. Today it is on the verge of not just hunger, but of starvation, according to the World Food Program (WFP). Last June, the WFP’s Director, former Governor David Beasley, warned that half of all Syrians were going to bed hungry, and that the country was on the brink of “mass starvation.” Meanwhile, the COVID-19 pandemic is raging through the country, unhindered by a healthcare system largely destroyed over ten years of war.

Millions of hard-pressed Syrians will go to bed hungry and cold tonight. Unilateral coercive measures imposed by the United States make the economic plight of the Syrian people worse.

We urge you, Mr. President, to help Syrians to alleviate a humanitarian crisis that threatens to trigger a new wave of instability in the Middle East and beyond by implementing the UN Special Rapporteur’s recommendation.

We believe that the legitimate national interests of the United States can be pursued without collectively punishing the people of Syria by means of economic sanctions.

Respectfully,

Prof. Dr. Michael **Abs**, Secretary-General, Middle East Council of Churches

His Beatitude, Joseph **Absi**, Melkite Greek

Catholic Patriarch of Antioch and of All the

East, of Alexandria and of Jerusalem

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