

To H.E. Catherine Ashton
High Representative of the Union
for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Rue de la Loi 175
B – 1048 Brussels

Brussels, 12 May 2012

Your Excellency,

The approval of Kofi Annan's plan by the UN Security Council and its agreement to deploy the Observer Mission (UNSMISS) did not stop violence in Syria. We are aware, as you are, that there are no easy solutions to stopping these violations of international law and to protecting the population. We share the concerns of Kofi Annan, the special envoy of the UN that Syria may well dissolve into civil war, with all the consequences for neighbouring countries and the whole region, unless the UN Observer Mission succeeds.

The frustration and the powerlessness of the international community and the continued absence of a political solution are intensifying the call to further arm the rebels of the Free Syrian Army and for a humanitarian intervention by military means. *Pax Christi International* however holds the view that continued militarization of the conflict in Syria should be definitively avoided.

The international community, including the EU, needs to accelerate the deployment of the UN observers if they really want to contribute to the protection of the Syrian population. They also should conscientiously exercise oversight of the implementation of the six points of the agreement facilitated by Kofi Annan. Otherwise, the Observer Mission will remain powerless to respond to detected acts of violence. Countries fostering a spiral of violence by providing weapons and technical support must at once be called to account.

The non-violent opposition movement that started a non-violent action for a free, democratic and just Syria, and that continues to plead for a peaceful change of regime, deserves more support from the EU. If, on the contrary, the militarization of the conflict continues, it will destroy the role played by the peaceful demonstrators and civil society. At the same time the international community should do as much as possible to insist that the regime accept desperately needed humanitarian help throughout the country.

We are confident that we share the same concerns. We therefore ask that you urgently defend this approach at the European Council for Foreign Relations on the 14th of May 2012.

Yours truly,

Marie Dennis
Co-President

Bishop Kevin Dowling
Co-President

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