



A Condemnation of the Islamic State and its Violations against Civilians

In the wake of another murdered western hostage by ISIS, the self-proclaimed “Islamic State”, Damascus Center for Human Rights Studies takes this opportunity to mourn the death of a true friend of Syria, to condemn his murderers, and to deplore all those who commit crimes against civilians.

Abdul-Rahman Kassig, formerly known as Peter, worked to provide aid and medical treatment to Syrian civilians, regardless of their affiliation or creed. His involvement in the ongoing Syrian disaster helped alleviate the suffering of civilians targeted and displaced by the war crimes and atrocities committed by parties in the conflict, including the Assad regime and ISIS.

Abdul-Rahman Kassig is the latest in a line of murdered western friends of the Syrian people. His killers publicized his murder knowing it would receive attention from the western media. Damascus Center for Human Rights Studies condemns any and all extrajudicial murder, regardless of nationality, religion, or political affiliation. The Damascus Center also notes the many thousands of killings undertaken by *ISIS*, including the murder of children, women, civilians, prisoners of war, members of minority groups, and others.

The Damascus Center for Human Rights Studies also notes that *ISIS* does not have a monopoly on the perpetration of war crimes and crimes against humanity. The Assad regime routinely deliberately murders civilians, including women, children, and refugees, through massacres and airstrikes. As a result the Syrian people finds itself caught between two murderous forces: those of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, and those of Assad. The true losers in this deplorable situation are the innocent civilians and refugees deliberately targeted, displaced, and killed in the name of power, politics, and religion.

While deplored murder, the Damascus Center for Human Rights Studies reaffirms its commitment to the Syrian people, and to their right to freedom, peace, and justice. Furthermore, the Damascus Center for Human Rights Studies urges all the relevant international organizations and agencies, especially the United Nations and its Security Council, to commit to protecting the Syrian people from all aggressors. In particular, the Damascus Center for Human Rights draws attention to Security Council Resolution 1674, which reaffirms the responsibility of parties of armed conflict to protect civilians, and notes the responsibility of the UN for maintaining peace and security. DCHRS also draws attention to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. ISIS has committed crimes against humanity and war crimes, as defined by this statute.



In memory of James Foley, Steven Sotloff, David Haines, Alan Henning, and Abdul-Rahman (Peter) Kassig, western friends of the Syrian people. Also in memory of the many thousands of Syrians, known and unknown, murdered at the hands of ISIS.

Damascus Center for Human Rights Studies

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For more information, please contact

Dr. Radwan Ziadeh, Executive director of the Damascus Center for Human Rights Studies.

Phone (571) 205-3590

Email : radwan.ziadeh@gmail.com

Mr. Mojahed Ghadban, Communication Officer.

Telephone (479) 799-8115

Email: info@dchrs.org

DCHRS is an independent, non-governmental organization, established in 2005, located in the Syrian capital of Damascus. Its mission is to foster a spirit of support and respect for the values and standards of human rights in Syria. As such, DCHRS recognizes and adheres to all pertinent international human rights agreements and declarations issued by the UN.

- DCHRS is a member of the following international networks:
- International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)
- Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN)
- NGO Coalition for the international Criminal Court
- International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect (ICRtoP)
- International Coalition of Sites of Conscience

DCHRS worked on a variety of documentation projects. Such projects included daily casualty reports, massacre reports, and other human rights violations reports. Also DCHRS has been working on advocacy and lobbying in different human rights institutions in order to educate and acknowledge about the deteriorating human rights situation in Syria. DCHRS opened local offices in Syria in order to document, collect, and observe human rights violations on the ground. After the launch of the Syrian revolution, the center increased its activities through working, communicating, and coordinating with many members and activists. Thus the center began documenting daily violations committed by the Syrian regime forces and all other sides of the conflict that can be classified as crimes against humanity and war crimes. Such violations included: extrajudicial killings, massacres, arbitrary detentions, enforced disappearances, rape, torture in prisons. DCHRS submitted those reports to many international and regional human rights organizations and communicated with the Report of the independent international commission of inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic on Syria.