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Measures to eliminate international terrorism

## Identical letters dated 25 November 2013 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, I have the honour to draw your attention to the following information.

Syria, the cradle of the revealed religions and nation of saints and prophets, is facing the barbaric onslaught of extremist *takfirist* factions. Their aim is to target its present, its future, its historic cultural legacy and all that they represent: a country whose memory encompasses millennia of successive civilizations, and one that represents love, peace and coexistence for all its people, at a time when extremism is rising in numerous countries of the region.

The sheikhs of strife, who are sheltered and sponsored by such well-known States as Qatar and Saudi Arabia, have been inciting discord and enmity on a daily basis. Their extremist fatwas, which are incompatible with the tolerant principles of Islam, motivate numerous terrorist groups with organizational or ideological links to Al-Qaida, which shun the Other and seek to bring Syria back to an age of obscurantism and backwardness. The groups have the Syrian State and people in their sights. Their terrorist suicide bombings and random shelling of peaceful neighbourhoods claim numerous civilian victims every day, sowing panic and fear without distinguishing between men, women, children and the elderly.

In the last few months, there has been concern that the extremist terrorist groups are systematically targeting Christians throughout the region, particularly in Syria. Areas in which Syrian citizens of the Christian faith reside, especially in Damascus and Aleppo, have come under intense shelling every day. Civilian homes, property, schools, churches and other places of worship have been targeted in order to spread panic and press the inhabitants to emigrate. Random shellings of schools and school buses have recently killed numerous innocent pupils and teachers. Alongside those peaceful neighbourhoods in the main cities, majority Christian towns and villages in Rif Dimashq and the surrounding areas of Homs have also repeatedly come under attack. The inhabitants have incurred verbal and physical



abuse, and their homes and churches have been looted and destroyed. The same has happened recently in the towns of Ma'lulah, Sadad and Dayr Atiyah. It is surprising and dismaying that States claiming concern for the Syrian people and its interests are keeping silent before such terrorist crimes against defenceless civilians. Indeed, some of those States are providing material, military and logistical support to terrorist groups, enabling them to pursue their crimes against the Syrian people and all its components while also placing pressure on those Syrian citizens to leave the country.

The Syrian Government emphasizes that Syrian-led dialogue among Syrians, without foreign interference, can allow the Syrian people, which alone has the constitutional right to determine the future of its own country and choose its leaders, to express its preferences through the ballot box. The Syrian Government has repeatedly expressed its readiness to participate in the Geneva conference and make it successful, thereby ensuring that the choices of the Syrian people are respected. At the same time, the Syrian Government is resolute in exercising its constitutional duty to protect its citizens, Muslims and Christians alike, from the crimes of armed terrorist groups.

If a peaceful solution to prove successful, and if the political process is to enjoy credibility among the Syrian people, there is a clear need to combat terrorism that targets Syrian civilians. In order for the violence and terrorism to stop, the States that are involved in backing armed terrorist groups must refrain from providing any kind of shelter and training or military, financial or logistical support. Those backers currently include certain States, foremost among which are Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey, and other well-known States led by France.

The Syrian Arab Republic looks to the Security Council to play a key role in countering the schemes aimed at expelling the Middle East's Christian inhabitants, who have deep roots in the region, and to warn of the grave dangers that these plans pose to the national unity, security and stability of many States of the region. Countering extremists ideologies and bringing pressure to bear on those that support the armed terrorist groups that are undermining the values of citizenship and coexistence are the only means of preserving the diversity that has always been a source of strength for successive civilizations in Syria.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 110 and of the Security Council.

*(Signed)* Bashar **Ja'afari**  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative