

WE THE SYRIANS *Refugees Appeal for Peace*

We the Syrians, refugees in northern Lebanon, gathered in organisations and associations, simple citizens and families, escaped from violence and death. Five years since the beginning of the war that has destroyed our country, we still live, millions of us, without a home or the opportunity to work, without medical assistance or education for our children; we do not have a future.

In our country there are more than 200 military groups that expelled us from our houses, made legitimate only by the power of violence. We still get killed, we are forced to fight, to live in fear, to escape and we are continuously humiliated and abused.

At the peace talks, only those who have economical and political interests in Syria participate and we do not consider them bearers of our requests.

We are the real victims of this war and the only right we have is to silently choose how to die. But in the thunderous sound of weapons, **we claim the right to let the world hear our voice** together with those who already support us and those who will join this appeal.

WE ASK

- **For the creation of humanitarian areas in Syria**, where people who choose neutrality instead of conflict, are provided with international protection and where armed stakeholders cannot enter, as is the case for example in the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó in Colombia (http://www.corteidh.or.cr/docs/medidas/apartado_se_05.pdf). We want humanitarian passageways to be opened in order to bring civilians in danger safely towards the end of the war and all the refugees to go back, living a secure life in their country;
- **For the end of the war:** an immediate end to the bombings, along with ending the supply of weapons, and the elimination of all weapons already in the country. Ending the siege of the dozens of Syrian cities (www.siegewatch.org) where civilians have no access to medical and humanitarian support and that those people to be assisted immediately and kept safe;
- **For prompt assistance to the victims** and support for those who are helping them: Freeing political prisoners and searching for the kidnapped and missing people; that the wounded and disabled because of the war are rescued and assisted, now and in the future;
- **That every sort of terrorism and extremism be fought**, but not through massacring innocent and disarmed civilians as now; this situation foments terrorism itself
- **That a political solution to the war be found and the civilians who refused the war be represented at the Geneva peace talks**, not only those who destroyed Syria;
- **The creation of a national unity government which represents all Syrians** in their diversity and which respects their dignity and their rights. We want truth and justice about who is responsible for this disaster and that the people who are trying to rebuild our country and those who are risking their lives to assist the victims be free to operate. Today, we want to call upon the best international forces, in order to promote coexistence and reconciliation, to stop the war and create a brand new future for our country.

Promoted by: Operazione Colomba, Non-violent Peace Corp of the “Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII” Association.

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*Operazione Colomba (www.operazionecolomba.it) has worked in Lebanon since September 2013, initially with exploratory trips throughout the country and since April 2014, with a stable presence at the refugee camp and in the village of Tel Abbas, 5 kilometres from the Syrian border.

After coping with the intimidation and brutality of some local Lebanese, the refugees asked the volunteers of Operazione Colomba to live with them, because a civil and unarmed presence of international volunteers can provide a strong deterrent to the use of violence.

For three years, the volunteers of Operazione Colomba have shared their life with the refugees in the camps of Lebanon. This experience allows the volunteers of Operazione Colomba to collect information and voice the requests of the Syrian and other refugees who escaped the war because they do not want to be forced to fight or be killed.