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GLOBAL | Alliance Expresses Concern About Syrian Crisis

On April 15, religious liberty organizations united under the Religious Liberty Partnership (RLP) released a statement on the crisis in Syria, asking the United Nations Special Envoy for Syria to pay particular attention to “vulnerable ethnic and religious minorities”, and calling for a designated day of prayer for the country.

The Istanbul Statement on the Church in Syria expresses concern about the exodus of Christians and other ethnic and religious minorities from Syria and calls on the international community to “provide sufficient protection for all ethnic and religious communities as well as their historical, religious, and cultural sites.”

“There was overwhelming support at our 2013 Consultation in Istanbul to speak out about the urgent situation facing Christians and other religious minorities in Syria at this present time,” said Mervyn Thomas, Chairman of the RLP and Chief Executive of Christian Solidarity Worldwide. “We urge Christian leaders around the world to respond to this call to prayer and action now in order to bring peace and stability to this troubled nation.”

According to the statement, drafted during the annual gathering of member organizations held in Istanbul in late March, the Religious Liberty Partnership commits “to raise awareness and work toward a peaceful solution of the current crisis, including reconciliation among the various ethnic and religious communities; and to utilize practices that prioritize the well-being of all Syrians when providing assistance and advocating on behalf of the vulnerable.” The full Istanbul Statement is available at the RLP website: www.RLPPartnership.org.

RLP is a collaborative effort of Christian organizations from over 20 countries focused on religious liberty. The RLP seeks to more intentionally work together in addressing advocacy, assistance, and in raising the awareness of religious liberty issues globally. In addition to the RLP Chairman, Mervyn Thomas, other members of the RLP Leadership Team include Godfrey Yogarajah, of the World Evangelical Alliance; Ron Boyd-Macmillan, Open Doors International, Netherlands; Anne Brandner, Global Peace Initiative, Canada; Andy Dipper, Viva, UK; Daniel

Hoffman of Middle East Concern; and Linus Pfister, HMK Switzerland. A full list of RLP members is on the Istanbul Statement.