



**Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)**



**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**

On the US Airstrike against Syria

April 14, 2018

Late Friday night (US time), April 13, President Trump announced that the United States, Great Britain, and France would commence a series of air and missile attacks in Syria purported to end Syrian government use of chemical weapons. About the same time, Saturday morning in Syria, areas in and near Damascus and Homs were bombed.

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and United Church of Christ oppose these most recent US-led air strikes in Syria, just as we have consistently called for the US to avoid military involvement in the Syrian war including not arming any of the parties involved. Let us be clear: we strongly condemn the use of chemical weapons. Their use has elevated the tactics used in this war to new levels. But the pain and suffering, death and injury that we have already witnessed in Syria over the last seven years is abhorrent. We do not see how this series of strikes will contribute to an end to fighting, a resolution of the war, or an alleviation of the suffering of the Syrian people.

Since March 2011, more than half a million Syrians have been killed, and more than half the country's population forced from their homes. More than five and half million Syrians are registered as refugees and even more are internally displaced. What began as demonstrations by Syrians against their government soon devolved into a violent war involving regional powers (Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Israel, among others), sectarian parties (including, but not limited to, the Islamic State), and international actors. Too many have fallen victim to the quest for control and power; too many have had their lives changed forever with no clear way out or hope for a future with dignity.

The US and Russia must set aside petty politics and work positively and collaboratively with all the parties of the Syrian war to seek an end to the violence and suffering, so that the Syrian people can begin to rebuild their lives. Such an effort would include:

- * An agreement for an immediate end to violence and war
- * Serious and sustained diplomatic efforts to reach a negotiated solution and a path forward
- * International commitment to address the humanitarian crisis, including providing for the needs of the Syrian people, among them the refugees and displaced
- * Regional and international pledges to support the rebuilding of the towns, cities, and communities that have been damaged

On the road to Damascus, the apostle Paul's life changed forever. He came to know God in new and profound ways. As people of faith, we mourn when we see God's children suffering. We decry our government's role and complicity in the perpetuation of that pain. We are called to seek abundant life for all people, a life with peace and with justice. We pray for a day when violence may cease and God's peace may indeed reign. With that hope, we stand with the people of Syria as the war in their land rages; we accompany them in their suffering, including the work of our partners in the region to provide for the immediate humanitarian needs of the affected people; and raise our voice so that this violence and destruction may end.

Rev. Teresa Hord Owens
General Minister and President
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Rev. Dr. John C. Dorhauer
General Minister and President
United Church of Christ

Rev. Julia Brown Karimu
Co-Executive, Global Ministries

Rev. Dr. James Moos
Co-Executive, Global Ministries