



SYRIA: PEACE IS POSSIBLE

CAMPAIGNING FOR PEACE TO COME TO SYRIA

Are you keen to support this campaign?

You're most welcome to make use of this toolkit to learn more about what you can do to make a difference.

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A TOOLKIT FOR ACTIVISTS AND CAMPAIGNERS

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The situation in Syria and the surrounding region is the most severe human rights and humanitarian crisis in the world.

The war in Syria has entered its sixth year and has created unprecedented suffering for the Syrian population and a wave of displaced persons both internally and externally: 7 million internally displaced and 4 million refugees in neighbouring countries and other regions of the world.

Peace seems an insurmountable challenge as gross and systematic human rights violations are inflicted by all parties to the conflict, and patent violations of international humanitarian law are committed.

Why a campaign on Syria?

Our campaign has a focus on the ongoing crisis and its manifestation in new coerced forms of mobility.

With this campaign, Caritas Internationalis wishes to reflect and unify the voices of many people by demanding an immediate and effective ceasefire and a de-escalation of hostilities in the country, and asking governments to commit to an effective and sustainable political resolution of the conflict.

Who is Caritas Internationalis?

We are a confederation of 165 Catholic member organisations, inspired by the Pope's portrayal of God's love. We strive to make a positive difference in the daily lives of all those who still have to leave their homes to find strength and courage as they travel into the unknown.

A WORD FROM THE HOLY FATHER

“Yet, today, unlike in the past, atrocities and unspeakable human rights violations, which characterise these conflicts, are transmitted live by the media.

Therefore, they captured the attention of the whole world. No one can pretend not to know! Everyone is aware that this war weighs in an increasingly unbearable way on the shoulders of the poor.

We need to find a solution, which is never a violent one, because violence only creates new wounds.”

Today, Caritas Internationalis invites all those who are concerned about the situation in Syria to stand up for human rights and take action to show how vital it is that all governments commit their support to bring about peace for the Syrian population.

Caritas Internationalis believes that we can act together with civil society groups to:

- help create and encourage an environment conducive to a successful peace dialogue between direct and indirect parties to the conflict;
- ensure that foreign and domestic policies do not contribute to the continuation of the conflict or undermine efforts to reach an inclusive, sustainable and peaceful resolution to the fighting;
- promote social cohesion both inside and outside Syria by welcoming refugees as a step forward towards peace;
- promote peace education as well as projects focused on livelihoods for refugees and the local population who live in poverty;

Mobilisation and awareness-raising activities

It is easy to think that the issue is too complex, too messy and that there is little we can do to effect change. With the actions listed below, though, we'll show you that, no matter the difficulties, there's lots that you can do to help:

- Write a short letter to your local newspaper, praising the work that Caritas agencies do locally to help Syrian refugees and ask for more political support from local and/or national policymakers. You can even share a copy of your letter on social media, after you have sent it. You can find stories of hope here www.syria.caritas.org.
- Have your family members, friends, work colleagues and neighbours sign the "I support the Caritas campaign for peace in Syria" and post it on Twitter.
- Organise a prayer vigil either in your parish group or community centre.
- Display our poster at your home, in the office, at your school, etc.
- Organise a forum in your area to encourage dialogue and raise awareness on the war in Syria.
- Organise peace education activities with students in primary and secondary education.
- Invite students in primary and secondary education to write prayers for peace in Syria.
- Embed our website URL into the homepage of your organisation.
- Share stories of hope, photos and interviews available on www.syria.caritas.org via Facebook and Twitter.
- Organise a peace event, rally or concert and invite local and/or national policymakers in charge of foreign affairs to delve deeper into the causes and consequences of the war in Syria. You can film the event and post recorded highlights, photos, interviews or individual messages on social media to show your support.
- Adapt the supporter's letter to endorse the campaign by writing to your local or national MP to hold them to account and make sure that they are following through on the promotion and implementation of the right of peoples to peace, enshrined in the UN Declaration on the Right of Peoples to Peace.

Social Media Campaigning

Twitter (www.twitter.com) and Facebook (www.facebook.com) are both great channels to promote the “Syria: Peace is Possible” campaign digitally, but not all activities and campaigners know how to use them to their full potential.

Creativity is the key to really successful social media campaigning. Be topical, take inspiration from other media sources related to the situation being dealt with through the campaign and look around on other established movements. Use pictures, video, music and any other expressive medium you can think of.

While most of us are familiar with Facebook, not very many use Twitter to disseminate information to large audiences. Twitter differs from Facebook, as the updates are far shorter snippets of information written in a text like format. Anyone can share or read short messages or “tweets” on Twitter of up to 140 characters. Twitter isn’t just about posting information; it is more about engagement and real time conversations, which particularly suits our needs to keep the campaign up and running.

Like us on Facebook www.facebook.com/IAmCaritas/ and follow us on Twitter @iamCARITAS by using the Syria peace campaign hashtag #peacepossible4syria.

Here are a few sample tweets that can be adapted and used on Twitter:

Sample tweets

#peacepossible4syria campaign says war in Syria has caused 4.8 million refugees and 6.6 internal refugees. Help raise awareness @iamCARITAS

Support the #peacepossible4syria campaign to encourage a truly inclusive peace process in Syria. Help raise awareness @iamCARITAS

Tell your govt to help reach an inclusive, sustainable & peaceful resolution to the fighting in Syria with the #peacepossible4syria campaign

#peacepossible4syria campaign of @iamCARITAS promotes social cohesion both inside and outside Syria as a step forward towards peace

Improve peace education and livelihoods for Syrian refugees with #peacepossible4syria campaign of @iamCARITAS

#peacepossible4syria campaign of @iamCARITAS calls on all sides for full humanitarian access to the entire country to reach people in need

We’d love to receive your feedback on how you’re supporting this campaign!! Please send us photos, stories and media resources that you’re using to promote this campaign.

If you’d like to get in touch, please write to Alfonso Apicella at apicella@caritas.va or call on +39 06 698 797 18.

We very much look forward to hearing about any involvement that you might wish to have with the campaign!!

Peace! Salam! السلام