

A Press Release on the “Paris terrorist attack” submitted by the International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty (AIDLR), from Bern, Switzerland

Je suis Paris!

Humanity is grieving and in shock; today we are all victims and in complete solidarity with Paris. We are traumatized by all the terrorist attacks which took place on 13 November in Paris, with the consequences of hundreds of victims. We strongly condemn the terrorism and the killing of human persons in Paris and we pray and express compassion and solidarity with the French people and all families affected.

We express solidarity with the victims and the pain of France and the people of Europe who have been affected by these acts of violence. However, we underline the need to solve regional problems through political and humanitarian decisions, looking first of all, at its source, in the Middle East and North Africa, where the people are affected by the consequences of violence, war and terrorism. It is our belief that the international community must offer special help for refugees or those who have been displaced from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Nigeria, Ukraine and from many other places of the world affected by violence, wars and terrorism. These attacks, perpetrated in the name of religion by fundamentalists, extremists and terrorists, create confusion with regard to fundamental freedoms and religion.

We believe that Christians and all religions –including Islam- are peacemakers. We also believe that interreligious and intercultural dialogue, education and training in the culture of diversity, the respect and protection of human rights, religious freedom or belief, freedom of expression and the understanding between people and religions, have to be developed strongly and intensively in all the world, with the support of different stakeholders - i.e. religious leaders, diplomats, politicians, academia, non-governmental organizations, mass media.

In the context of concerned present scenario, the AIDLR strongly condemns the violence and terrorism, and asks the international community to be vigilant and to take every necessary precaution regarding the protection of life, the dignity of every human being and the security of the people and public square, and the strong commitment on continuing to defend the freedoms of: religion or belief, conscience, expression, assembly and the movement of people. May we also suggest employing wisdom and prudence to not fall into the trap of misinterpreting the terrorists, radicals and nationalists that might act in the name of religion or against religion. Let us not confuse one religion with terrorism. We believe the French government and the international community will do their work in asking that those who have killed innocent lives in Paris and elsewhere in the world thus affecting our common values, liberty and security should be held accountable. Let us pray and be united and in solidarity with the people of France as we support global peace.

Note: The first official presentation of this press release took place publically at the International Conference on “Legislation, Religion and Freedom in the Context of Globalization” organized by the Association “Constiinta si Libertate” at the Romanian Parliament on 19 of November 2015 where the AIDLR made a presentation. That time the Secretary General of the International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty proposed to all participants at the International Conference from Bucharest to observe a minute of silence in memory of the victims of the terrorist attack that took place in Paris on 13 of November 2015.

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