

# US Sponsored “Moderates” “Have Sown Terror Everywhere”: Testimony of the Archbishop of Aleppo

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Global Research, October 29, 2016  
[Fort Russ](#) 28 October 2016

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Crimes against Humanity](#),  
[Terrorism](#)

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*The whole world is terrified at the sight of the images from Aleppo that the mass media have been presenting in recent days. Many of our friends abroad are concerned and want to hear from us. We are living tragic moments in our history and what's happening here continues to make Aleppo and its people suffer, people that for more than five years have been unable to have peace, so harassed and massacred by armed groups that have come from all over the world, to conduct a self-styled holy war, in a country governed (according to them) by atheists and infidels!*

For five years now the terrorists here have been calling the shots, where the civil authorities of the country have not managed to be present. They have sown terror everywhere, killed tens of thousands of innocent people, destroyed thousands of factories, businesses and institutions of public services, looted houses and stolen, without any concern, assets of the country and the citizens. They have made victims of many innocent people, kidnapping and brutally murdering countless peaceful people, including nuns, priests and even bishops.



This still going on today: this morning a dozen shells fell in two of our residential areas, causing further destruction and in one neighborhood, numerous deaths and injuries.

Battles are raging on the outskirts of the city: the rebels from the “Al-Nusra Front” are attempting to take positions in areas considered strategic, almost completely depopulated and almost entirely destroyed, that they seized and held until last June at the city's edge. Images of these places of utter desolation are spread widely by the TV networks.

And it is there that the great battles now going on are taking place. Three weeks ago we put high hopes on the ceasefire, hoping it would enable peace-making followed by national reconciliation and a resumption of normal life in the country! Unfortunately this truce, weakened by continued violations by the radical opponents, was officially broken in recent days, by the unexpected raid by the coalition allied to the rebels in Deir-El-Zor.

These raids were on a Syrian army military base and killed more than 90 soldiers in their barracks, not to mention the number of undeclared injured. Is that the way to stop the fighting?

Therefore we hope and we are counting on the grace of God, the only one able to arouse the conscience of the great decision-makers. The terrifying spectacle of what happens has to shake every man that respects the sanctity of human life. So if Mr. Staffan de Mistura can manage to revive the peace process, we can hope for a bright spell and perhaps even for the concrete results of peace, the *sine qua non* for the foundation of the long-awaited dialogue.

The hardest thing for Christians who are currently present in Aleppo would be the prospect of having to live, morning and evening, in anxiety in this situation of insecurity: destabilizing disconcerting uncertainty. They are afraid for the next day, and the future of their children troubles them greatly. Imagine that one day a Muslim fundamentalist state would be imposed on them — for them this is an unbearable nightmare.

This is why we turn to our brothers in France and throughout the West, and we beg you to help us ensure that this does not happen. We are not asking you to make war for us, but only to end the unjust claims of your allies that want to impose antiquated laws, laws that are unbearable for the people of the twenty-first century who want to be free to choose their culture, their style life and, finally, their faith. We call on our brothers in France to pray for us and all women and all men concerned about human dignity and love of freedom, to come to our rescue to save our dear country from the depth of the fundamentalist regime they are trying to put us in. Please help us to continue to live in dignity on this blessed land of our birth!

*Aleppo, 28 settembre 2016 (translated from Italian)*

*Jean-Clément Jeanbart, Archbishop of Aleppo*

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