



September 25, 2018

His Excellency Dr. Hassan Rouhani  
President of the Islamic Republic of Iran  
Islamic Republic of Iran

Mr. President:

We write on behalf of Syrian Americans to express deep regret concerning the counterproductive role your armed forces and their subsidiaries have had in the Syrian conflict, and to urge you to start contributing positively toward the peaceful conclusion of this crisis: for the sake of the Syrian people, your own security, and the entire region.

The origin of this crisis is simple. Living daily under a corrupt and oppressive government, the Syrian people simply demanded equality, freedom, and democracy. Yet, thanks to the insecurity and brutality of your client, Bashar al-Assad, more than 500,000 people are dead, 12 million people displaced, and the regional order turned on its head.

You have helped transform that which started as a simple protest into a bloody, radicalized, and regionalized war that threatens the lives of Syrian civilians and has cost you billions in support of the financially insolvent Assad regime, which will take you decades—if not longer—to recoup. It has further empowered your adversary Saudi Arabia and has provided safe haven to violent Islamist radicals using your country's play for regional expansion as justification for their own violent, terroristic recruitment.

As you well know, these developments have left you exposed to trouble at home. Your own supporters have flooded the streets demanding you “leave Syria alone” out of frustration that you would rather spend billions to float a foreign, illegitimate regime than to advance your own nation. Likewise, your actions have jeopardized the security of your citizens, opening the door to condemnable jihadist attacks.

For the sake of your own country's safety and stability, listen to your people: stop your military intervention on behalf of Bashar al-Assad in Syria.

We also ask that you consider ways to start working positively as part of the peace process. This includes taking real steps to:

- Contribute earnestly toward the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2254 (2015), which identifies a path to institute a transitional governing body before establishing a new constitution and viable election process in Syria;
- Facilitate the release of detained family members of Syrian Americans held in Assad regime prisons;
- Draw down your direct and indirect military presence in Syria, including the development of ballistic missiles in the country's east; and
- End your support for proxy forces, like Asaib ahl al-Haq and Harakat Hezbollah Nujaba, that terrorize the Syrian people and have targeted U.S. soldiers in Iraq.

We encourage you to start working toward these goals in Syria. The security of your citizens, Syrians, and the region depends on it.

Sincerely,

Dr. Yahya Basha  
*Board Member, Americans for a Free Syria*