



The Islamic Society of North America

September 24, 2013

His Excellency Dr. Hassan Rouhani
President
Islamic Republic of Iran

Dear President Rouhani,

As-salaamu 'alaikum!

On behalf of the Islamic Society of North America, and the Muslim community of the United States, we wish you heartfelt congratulations on your election as President of the Islamic Republic of Iran. We appreciate your positive tone and willingness to engage in dialogue with the United States and the international community to foster a stronger relationship with the people of Iran. We would also like to express our gratitude for your invitation to meet with us during your time in New York for the United Nations General Assembly.

As you know, the Islamic Society of North America is the largest Muslim organization in the Western hemisphere, comprised of several hundred Muslim community and professional organizations in the United States and Canada. ISNA serves the community through regional conferences, leadership training programs, interfaith initiatives, and youth development programs. Our office in Washington, DC works closely with the interfaith community to build bridges of understanding with people of all faiths and with government officials to represent Muslims on issues of faith and public policy.

As an organizational representative of the American Muslim community, ISNA finds it essential to bring issues of concern to your attention. Among the most pressing issues we face globally today is the ongoing conflict in Syria. The American Muslim community, including the majority of grassroots national and regional organizations, is very concerned about the position that Iran has taken towards the conflict in Syria. I would like to summarize those concerns in the following points.

- Iranian support of an oppressive regime that has committed crimes against humanity, and ethnic cleansing in Syria is inconsistent with the historic tradition of Shia community supporting the oppressed, and not the oppressors.
- The Iranian image can be improved and sectarian animosity can be healed if Iran moves proactively and publicly to end the crisis in Syria in a way that will preserve the interests of the Iranian government and the historic relationship between the Iranian and Syrian people.
- Iran has spent millions of dollars to support the Syrian regime with arms, which have contributed to crimes against the Syrian people. Instead Iran should consider contributing similar resources for humanitarian relief, especially in the three areas under siege for more than 18 months, in Homs, West Ghouta, and East Ghouta. We suggest

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publicly contributing such humanitarian assistance to the Syrian Red Crescent or the International Committee of the Red Cross.

- We request you to hold a meeting with leaders of Syrian American organizations to further the discussion on the crisis in Syria.

I appreciate the Iranian commitment to the unity of the Muslim Ummah worldwide. However, certain steps that have been taken by the Iranian authorities, including Iran's position on the Syrian crisis, are not helpful for achieving the goal of unity.

In addition to the concerns regarding Syria, we are concerned about the growing tension between Sunni and Shia groups. American Sunni and Shia Scholars signed a declaration this month, to address the issues of tension between the two groups, some of which is fueled by the conflict in Syria. We request your endorsement of this dialogue in order to limit the spread of further tension and encourage cooperation between the two groups.

Lastly, we know the issues of freedom and justices are important Islamic principles. This includes the process of trial. I would like to specifically address the issue of Amir Hekmati, an American Muslim from Michigan, who is currently being held in Iran. We are seeking your help in the release of this young man.

We appreciate the opportunity to meet with you, and look forward to a positive response to our recommendations.

Sincerely,

Imam Mohamed Magid
President
Islamic Society of North America

Mr. Salam Al-Maryati
President
Muslim Public Affairs Council