

Mister President of the Republic
Palais de l'Élysée
55 rue du Faubourg Saint Honoré
75008, Paris

Mister minister of European and Foreign Affairs
37 Quai d'Orsay
75007 Paris

Mister minister of Economy and Finances
139 Rue de Bercy
75012 Paris

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Since 2014, almost all of the peaceful and democratic Franco-Syrian associations are facing an upsurge in bank blockages preventing them from carrying out their humanitarian and medical aid missions. Refusal to open bank accounts, closing accounts for no reason, closing accounts on online donation collection platforms, delays and cancellations of transfers ... the obstacles are numerous.

A survey conducted from January to March 2018, by the Syrian Development and Relief Collective (CODSSY) and three of its member associations (ASML/Syria, INS and Women Now for Development), made it possible to establish the extent of the problem. The report is edifying: 96% of the 25 Franco-Syrian associations interviewed encountered banking difficulties, more than 60% of them encountered at least two different types of problems. The problem is widespread since it concerns at least 4 of the 5 main French banking groups.

We, representatives of Franco-Syrian associations, consider that these obstacles are intolerable because they severely limit our humanitarian, medical and development actions on the ground. Delays and rejection of transfers lead to delays in building schools, supplying hospitals or distributing humanitarian aid to populations living in extreme conditions. Humanitarian field personnel, already criminalized by the Syrian regime and threatened by radical armed groups, are now also under financial pressure from the very countries that are supposed to support it politically.

We fully understand the stakes of the fight against the financing of terrorism and the legitimacy of the controls it implies. However, the abusive application of the precautionary principle leads to an unfair and counterproductive situation, which goes against the strategic interests of France and the fight against terrorism. It is humanitarian action that alleviates the suffering of local populations, increases their resilience and limits the development of radicalization. Far from being only moral, humanitarian missions are also strategic.

On March 22, 2018, during the presentation of the new humanitarian strategy of France, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Jean-Yves Le Drian, announced an unprecedented tripling of the budget allocated to the humanitarian who became "one of the pillars of our foreign politic ". By joining the Istanbul process on global humanitarian reform in

the summer of 2017, France was also signaling its commitment to a major demand for this reform: increasing the role accorded to local civil society in beneficiary countries. France recognized that, to be effective, humanitarian aid should not be concentrated in the hands of only large international NGOs, but must rely as much as possible on local actors.

However, for this strategy to be effective, it is essential that the security imperatives do not make impossible any humanitarian action. Associations must be able to transfer funds and work in acceptable conditions. The survival of Syrian populations, the interest of France and the security of its inhabitants are at stake.

Convinced that solutions are possible, we call for the opening of a discussion bringing together all relevant public authorities, banking institutions, as well as a delegation of Franco-Syrian associations, so that concrete solutions can be found quickly, and implemented.



Signatories :

- Arts et âme-ARZEAM
- Association Alsace-Syrie
- Association Alwane
- Association Medina
- ASML/Syria
- Association de solidarité avec le peuple syrien
- Association de Soutien au Peuple Syrien
- Centre syrien de médias et de la liberté d'expression (SCM)
- CODSSY (Collectif de Développement et Secours Syrien)
- Cœur et Action pour la Syrie
- Initiative for a New Syria
- La Maison de Palmyre
- Musawa
- Nazra
- Rozana for Media
- Revivre
- Relief & Reconciliation International
- SOS Syrie France
- Souria Houria
- Syria Charity
- Syrians & Friends Paris
- Syrie MDL
- Tous pour la Syrie
- UOSSM (Union des Organisations de Secours et Soins Médicaux)
- Women Now for Development
- Yalla ! Pour les Enfants