

Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs

1995 Nobel Peace Prize

<i>Rome Office</i>	<i>Geneva Office</i>	<i>London Office</i>	<i>Washington D.C. Office</i>
Accademia Naz. Dei Lincei 1200 Via della Lungara 10 I-00165 Rome, Italy Tel. (+39-06) 687-2606 Fax: (+39-06) 687-8376 pugwashdc@aol.com Email: pugwash@iol.it	7bis Avenue de la Paix (2nd floor) 1202 Geneva, Switzerland Tel.: (+41-22) 9073667 Fax: (+41-22) 9073669 Mobile: (+41-79) 6598186 E-mail: batsanov@hotmail.com	Ground Floor Flat 63A Great Russell Street London WC1B 3BJ, UK Mobile: (+44)(0) 7920 747 560 E-mail: sibutcher@earthlink.net	1111 19th St., NW, Suite Washington, DC 20036 USA Tel. (+1-202) 478-3440 Fax: (+1-202) 238-9604 E-mail:
Please reply to: Rome Office []	Geneva Office []	London Office [x]	Washington DC Office []

Statement on Iraq and Syria

by

Pugwash President Amb. Jayantha Dhanapala and Secretary General Prof. Paolo Cotta-Ramusino

The fighting and the spread of the ISIL militias in Syria and Iraq have shocked the international community, which fears an intensified regional conflict along sectarian lines (in particular Sunni vs. Shia or Alawites). Despite a long tradition of peaceful coexistence, ISIL is trying to exploit the Sunni-Shia divide in the region and also at large in the Muslim world. In Syria and Iraq, conflict has brought in massive violations of human rights, atrocities and war crimes and a huge exodus of refugees and displacement of people. Barbaric acts are taking place, as shown, for instance, by the recent brutal killing of about 1700 Iraqi soldiers or by the heavy record of civilians killed in Syria, even with the use of chemical weapons. Violence of course generates violence, and the need of the international community to take action in order to stop the violence is becoming more urgent. While local communities and civil society in Iraq and in Syria are acting bravely to try to restore peace and a climate of peaceful coexistence, the situation remains grave and dangerous.

We make an appeal for an early cessation of hostilities in the entire Middle Eastern area, for the return of mutual respect and tolerance among different religious and ethnic communities, and for the respect of the territorial integrity of the States in the Middle Eastern region, as this is a prerequisite for avoiding an endless intensification of the conflict. We believe that attempts to flare and capitalize on the Sunni-Shia differences can only prolong and intensify the conflict, especially when it involves support--financial, military or in any other form--to radical groups, which are in total disrespect of all civilized norms of behavior. Such support, and encouragement for such support (both open and secret), should be discontinued immediately. We call upon the government and the political elite in Iraq to develop and put in place a carefully designed package of measures to guarantee the inclusion of all the national and religious groups in the political process.

We call for developing inclusive dialogue between the Government, opposition and the moderate fighters in Syria, which should lead to the gradual cessation of hostilities and the implementation and expansion of local cease-fire agreements, which should allow to start improving the dire situation and suffering of the civilian population, and to move towards the reconvening of the Geneva process with the participation of all the interested countries.

All neighbouring countries in the region, including Iran, should help in bringing peace and reconciliation to the region and, when feasible, in promoting and facilitating local ceasefires.

23 June 2014