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Urgent need to protect religious minorities in Syria following the recent terrorist attack on Mar Elias Church in Damascus

European Parliament resolution of 10 July 2025 on the urgent need to protect religious minorities in Syria following the recent terrorist attack on Mar Elias Church in Damascus (2025/2798(RSP))

(C/2026/1445)

The European Parliament,

— having regard to its previous resolutions on Syria,

— having regard to the statements by the VP/HR and EEAS Spokesperson of 11 March, 7 May and 23 June 2025 on Syria,

— having regard to the Council conclusions of 23 June 2025 on Syria and the European Council conclusions of 26 June 2025 on the Middle East,

— having regard to Rules 150(5) and 136(4) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas Syria's religiously and ethnically diverse society suffered for over a decade at the hands of the violent and divisive Assad regime and terrorist groups, especially Daesh, affecting all communities, including Arabs, Kurds, Sunnis, Shias, Alawites, Christians, Druze and Yazidis;

B. whereas a spree of widespread violence, including sexual violence, along the Syrian coast targeting the Alawite community began in March 2025 and is still ongoing, with over 1 200 civilian victims; whereas Alawite women are victims of an alarming and growing trend of mass abductions and sexual slavery;

C. whereas widespread sectarian clashes in April 2025 killed over 10 Druze civilians;

D. whereas on 22 June 2025, a suicide terrorist attack on the Mar Elias Greek Orthodox Church in Damascus killed at least 25 and injured over 60, marking the deadliest attack against Christians in years; whereas a newly formed Islamist terrorist group, Saraya Ansar al-Sunna, claimed this attack;

E. whereas although the transitional Syrian authorities have made assurances of protection and inclusion to religious communities, the recent developments fuel the climate of fear and call into question the transitional authorities' capacity to duly protect religious communities;

1. Strongly condemns the traumatic terrorist attack against the Mar Elias Church and all threats against worship sites, some historically significant; urges the Syrian authorities to improve safety measures and restore the Mar Elias Church;

2. Strongly condemns all attacks targeting religious and ethnic communities and acknowledges heightened fears among them, seven months into the political transition; expresses solidarity with all victims;

3. Notes, with concern, that many Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) members with grave human rights violation records have assumed roles within the transitional administration, with potentially concerning implications for religious freedom, as evidenced by the recurrence of incidents involving Syrian officials;

4. Urges the Syrian transitional authorities to facilitate swift, transparent and independent investigations into these acts, and take all necessary actions to quell sectarian violence, ensure accountability, including by prosecuting perpetrators and enablers of human rights violations such as in the case of Mar Elias, uphold freedom of religion and protect all communities;

5. Reiterates the EU's support, also through the conditional lifting of sanctions, for a human rights-based political transition in Syria, with transitional justice, the fight against impunity, prohibiting arbitrary violence, a constitutional guarantee of inclusive governance and of adequate representation of religious and ethnic communities, a People's Assembly, as well as respect for international law as prerequisites for its success; calls on the Syrian transitional authorities to present a specific timeline for organising credible, free, fair and inclusive elections; calls for the EU to set up a Syria reconstruction fund, conditional on demonstrable progress on these priorities and in coordination with relevant international institutions, that would promote interfaith dialogue, conflict resolution and reconciliation; calls on the European Commission to give priority to the Conference with Syrian civil society;

6. Urges the Commission and the European External Action Service to include the protection of religious communities and the freedom of religion or belief in their dialogue with the transitional authorities in Syria;

7. Highlights the vulnerability of Christian communities in Syria and the constant threats against worshippers, whose protection should be guaranteed by the authorities; highlights the great diversity within Syria's confessional groups, as exemplified by the Greek Orthodox, Syriac Orthodox, the Armenian Apostolic, Chaldean and Maronite Churches; underlines the importance of preserving and cherishing their and other communities' contributions to Syria's religious and cultural heritage and calls for Syria's new political architecture to be reflective of this diversity;

8. Encourages the Syrian transitional authorities to make progress on outstanding issues such as the restitution of religious property confiscated under the Assad regime;

9. Calls on the Council to maintain and impose more targeted sanctions on actors responsible for religious freedom violations in Syria;

10. Calls for the Syrian transitional authorities, the EU and the Member States, as well as the international partners of the Global Coalition against Daesh, to advance efforts against Islamist terrorism, protect all Syrians and tackle the situation in the al-Hol and Roj camps; warns against the serious international security risk that a sudden disengagement of the United States in the region would cause in this uncertain context; calls for Syria's territorial integrity to be respected;

11. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the VP/HR, the European External Action Service, the Council and the Syrian authorities.