

Ambassador Bennett Calls for Release of Abducted Nuns in Syria

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News Release

December 5, 2013 - Andrew Bennett, Canada's Ambassador for Religious Freedom, today issued the following statement:

"Canada calls for the liberation of 12 Greek Orthodox nuns who have been abducted from the Monastery of Mar Taqla in the Syrian village of Maaloula. Their abduction follows other attacks against the Christian community in Maaloula, attacks that have driven much of the Christian population of the village from their ancestral land.

"The continued attacks against the Christian community in Syria are unacceptable.

"We encourage the Syrian authorities to do their utmost to help liberate the detained nuns and afford them every protection necessary to allow them to return to their life of prayer and service at the Monastery of Mar Taqla. We continue to call upon the Syrian authorities to prosecute those responsible for such acts and to stem the rising tide of sectarian violence.

"Canada remains deeply concerned by the suffering of the Syrian people and by widespread reports of violations of human rights, including reports of churches and mosques being destroyed or used for military purposes.

"Canada stands by the Syrian people and will continue to push for pluralistic, democratic development that protects the rights of all Syrians, regardless of faith, allowing them to live in peace."

- 30 -

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