

Christians Demand Safe Return of Kidnapped Archbishops

A new petition is urging American believers to call for the rescue of two kidnapped archbishops. In February 2013, Fathers Michael Kayyal and Maher Mahfouz were kidnapped in Syria near the Turkish border. The driver was murdered in the process. Since then, no one has heard from the victims.

Now the International Christian Union is calling for the United States government to resolve the case of Kayyal and Mahfouz's abduction. The petition, which has over 1,100 signatures, reads as follows:

On April 22, 2013, both the Greek and Syriac Orthodox archbishops of Aleppo, Boulos Yazigi and Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim (U.S. citizen), were kidnapped in Syria near the Turkish border. Their driver, Deacon Fatha' Allah Kabboud, was killed.

Today, 4 years later, the bishops remain missing—though for some time it has been rumored that only one of them is still alive. The bishops were abducted on their way back from the Turkish border, where they were negotiating the release of two priests, Fathers Michael Kayyal and Maher Mahfouz, who had themselves been kidnapped in February 2013.

We have been quietly inquiring behind the scenes for four years now. We will not be silent any more. As per the Freedom of Information Act and the fact that one of these men is a U.S. citizen, we are now demanding from the United States government in particular as well as the international community in general, to provide us with answers as to the whereabouts of these two servants of the Lord and the church, in the name of humanity and decency. We urge the United States government to place whatever pressure need be applied

on all its allies to obtain results in this matter, particularly Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Israel and Syria.

If these two clergymen are deceased, release their bodies so that they may receive a proper and dignified burial. If by any miracle of God, any one of them is still alive, we urge the U.S. President, the Senate and the members of Congress and their allies to put their efforts together with other countries in the region and help bring them home. Please help us bring our brothers home.

Your immediate action is highly appreciated. {eo}