

## Seiko Lee Sings for Syrian Refugee Humanitarian Relief Efforts

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New York, USA - Seiko Lee presented a benefit concert in New York on July 28 in an effort to raise funds for humanitarian relief toward the conditions in war-torn Syria.

Dr. Bishop Emanuel Aydin, a senior cleric of the Syriac Orthodox Church, distinguished scholar and humanitarian, and founder of the Institute for Peace in the Orient based in Vienna, Austria, has been raising funds to assist Christians in Syria who have been ensnared in the conflict there.

The concert in New York City was the second such benefit concert that Ms. Lee and Bishop Aydin have collaborated on. Earlier this year Ms. Lee performed at Bishop Aydin's church in Vienna, Austria, and that concert served as the impetus for the New York event.



Bishop Aydin and Archbishop Mor Cassianus of the Syriac Orthodox Church spoke at the concert about the harsh circumstances in Syria. Humanitarian efforts are desperately needed in this war-torn region. The current conflict has already claimed nearly 90,000 lives, according to authorities in the Syriac Orthodox Church, headquartered in Damascus. In April of this year two bishops were kidnapped and a deacon was

killed by members of a rebel faction, who are currently holding the bishops in an undisclosed location in Syria.



“Christian and Muslim civilians are in mortal danger by just staying in their own homes,” stated his eminence, Mor Cassianus, Archbishop of the Antiochian Syriac Orthodox Church in Columbus, Ohio. “They are frequently killed before they can even arrive at refugee camps in Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan,” he said.

Bishop Aydin is reporting to the Syriac Patriarch H.H. Ignatius Zakka Iwas regarding the efforts of people in the United States and Europe to assist in answering their urgent plea for humanitarian assistance.

Ms. Lee then offered a highly varied selection of music, ranging from opera arias by Dvorak and Puccini, to music from around the world, ranging from Brazil, Austria, France, Korea, Nepal, the Middle East, and the United States. The concert also featured a video titled “Building Bridges through Song,” which highlighted Ms. Lee’s world concert tour and her efforts as an artist to use music in highly altruistic ways as an Ambassador for Peace.



More than 400 concerned individuals attended the concert that was held in the Grand Ballroom of the New Yorker Hotel, including dignitaries and interfaith clergy sympathetic to the plight of the Christians in Syria.

In 2010 Dr. Aydin established the Institute for Peace in the Orient to act as a conduit for aid to those in need. The concert was presented and sponsored by Seiko Lee Project (NPO), and cosponsoring organizations included the Universal Peace Federation, the New Yorker Hotel, Yonkers First Arabic Baptist Church, UP-SWING, Co. Ltd. Japan, St. Sophia Syriac Orthodox Church (Columbus, Ohio), and the New York City Symphony.



After the concert, the Washington Times held an interview with Bishop Aydin concerning the situation in Syria.