

SBC leaders urge Obama to defend ‘the least of these’ against ISIS

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WASHINGTON (RNS)—Southern Baptist Convention President [Ronnie Floyd](#) and former SBC leaders called on President Obama to defend “the least of these” against the Islamic State, the militant Islamist group that’s also known as ISIS or ISIL.



Ronnie Floyd “Since ISIS is a continuing threat to world peace in a way unknown to us since the Nazis of World War II, we humbly call upon you to use the influence and power of your distinguished office to take the necessary actions now in this urgent hour to bring an end to these human atrocities,” Floyd and his predecessors wrote in an open letter to Obama.

“The abuse, brutalization and murder of children, women and men that is occurring before the world calls our country to lead forward to bring this to an end.”

Floyd, pastor of [Cross Church](#) in northwest Arkansas, was joined by 16 former SBC presidents in the “urgent appeal” that came after recent

reports the Islamic State was responsible for beheadings 21 Egyptian Coptic Christians in Libya and kidnapping more than 200 Assyrian Christians.

The letter also was released just before the Jewish holiday of Purim, which recalls the deliverance of Persian Jews by Queen Esther. The Baptist leaders told Obama he had a similar mandate to save an imperiled population from extinction.

“We believe you also ‘have come to the kingdom for such a time as this,’” they wrote as Congress weighs whether to give Obama official authorization to use military force against the Islamic State. “You have been given an historical moment to lead in protecting the people and the principle of religious freedom in the world.”

The rare joint statement by Southern Baptist leaders, who are known for their autonomy, assures Obama they are praying for him “to have wisdom and courage in this hour” and that he has the “unequivocal support of the vast majority” of members of the denomination in taking the fight to the Islamic State.

“The world will applaud your courage and compassion as you defend those that Scripture calls ‘the least of these,’” they wrote.