

## **Statement of th Holy Synod of the Church of Greece on the situation in Syria**

Athens, 9/12/24

The Standing Holy Synod of the Church of Greece, following the recent statement of His Beatitude Hieronymos II, Archbishop of Athens and All Greece, regarding the situation that has developed in Syria, declares that it is fully informed of any relevant developments, maintaining continuous contact with the Patriarchate of Antioch, and expresses its concern for its flock and the other Christians of the country, while it is ready to offer any assistance it should be required.

It is well known that Syria became the cradle of Christianity, since it was there that first the disciples of Christ were named as Christians, and within it holy figures flourished with far-reaching, universal radiance such as Saint John Chrysostom, Saint John of Damascus, and Saint Symeon the Stylite.

The Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch, which occupies a very significant and prominent place in the history of the Christian Church, as one of the five historical and ancient Patriarchates, is a historical institution, with a centuries-long tradition and it is required to remain alive and flourishing in the region of Syria as a continuation of the ecclesiastical tradition.

Therefore, it would be a tragedy if Orthodox Christianity were to be eradicated from Syria, an outrage that would be unprecedented in history.

Since 2011, when the civil war in the country began, during which, in addition to the hundreds of thousands of civilian deaths and millions of refugees, there was extensive destruction and vandalism of churches and monasteries, the Church of Greece has demonstrated an active interest, commitment and support, material and otherwise, to the suffering Syrian people.

Also, in 2013, the Church of Greece sent letters to the United Nations and the European Union, expressing its deep distress and strong protest for the lives of the two kidnapped and still missing Metropolitans of

Verroia (Aleppo) and Alexandria, Mr. Pavlos and Youhanna Ibrahim of the Syriac Orthodox Church.

Syria has remained in history for its interreligious tolerance and the harmonious coexistence of Christians with the Arab community and the Islamic authorities.

The Standing Holy Synod wishes and prays that this peaceful and constructive coexistence of Christians and Muslims will not be disturbed, but that the mutual respect, which was the basis of this harmonious relationship, will continue to exist.

It also appeals to both the Greek Government and the international community to take urgent initiatives to establish peace in the region, protect the civilian population, prevent a humanitarian tragedy, and ensure the presence of the ancient Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and the Christians in the region.

English translation  
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