



## **A hierarch of the Patriarchate of Antioch visits the Russian Navy church in Tartus**

On May 21, 2019, Metropolitan Basil of Accra (Orthodox Church of Antioch) visited the church of the Righteous Warrior Fyodor Ushakov located at the Russian Navy logistical station in Tartus, Syria.

His Eminence Basil had blessed the construction of this church in 2016. It took the military 45 days to build it.

Addressing the Russian troops and commanders of the logistical station, Metropolitan Basil said, “I teach history and I know what Russia means for us and for the whole world. Russia is more than a friend for us, as she would always come to our aid. If it were not for her, there would be no Christian here, not even Syria herself. The Middle East would be different. You have come from various parts of vast Russia, but however far you may live, be sure that you will always be in our hearts”.

Speaking about the Ukrainian church schism, including anticanonical actions of Constantinople in Ukraine, Metropolitan Basil explained the position of the Orthodox Church of Antioch on this matter. As is known, in January 2019, during his meeting with His Holiness Patriarch Kirill, His Beatitude Patriarch John of Antioch pointed to the inadmissibility of unilateral decisions leading as a result to a schism in the world Orthodoxy. According to His Eminence Basil, the truth in this matter is on the side of the Russian Church and the Patriarchate of Antioch will firmly support the position of faithfulness to sacred canons.

Participating in the meeting was also Rev. Arsenios Lahham of the Orthodox Church of Antioch.

The guests, together with Archpriest Kirill Vovk, who takes pastoral care of the station servicemen, sang the Easter troparion in Arabic and Church Slavonic. Metropolitan Basil invited the station priest to take part in divine services at diocesan churches.

On behalf of the station commanders, His Eminence was presented with an icon of St. Andrew the-First-Called. The hierarch, in his turn, gave the Russian military an embroidered image of the two-headed eagle as a sign of gratitude to Russia.

*DECR Communication Service*