A Russian Orthodox Church representative discusses with a Syrian Jacobite Church hierarch the humanitarian situation of Syrian refugees in Bekaa Valley



November 11, 2017 – Hegumen Arseniy (Sokolov), representative of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia to the Patriarch of Great Antioch, met with Archbishop Boulos Safar of Zahle and Bekaa, Syriac Jacobite Church, to discuss the implementation of decisions made at the September meeting between Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate department for external church relations (DECR), and representatives of Lebanese churches.

The meeting took place in Zahle, Lebanon, at the archdiocese of the Syriac Jacobite Church. The sides discussed the humanitarian situation of Syrian refugees residing at the Bekaa Valley as well as specific problems of the Russian Orthodox Church's aid to them. Their situation remains grave. It is in this

Lebanese valley that hundreds of thousands of refugees from Syria who had to leave their cities and villages, which turned out to be amid hostilities, have found a refuge. Some of them are placed at refugee camps while others, first of all Christians, in the cities of Zahle and Baalbek. For the recent years, the Syro-Jacobite diocese in the Bekaa Valley has accumulated a considerable experience in giving them humanitarian aid.

In April 2017, an interreligious working group for aid to the Syrian population was set up under the Russian Presidential Council for Cooperation with Religious Associations. The group has already organized the raising and supplying humanitarian aid for those in need in the Syrian provinces of Aleppo, Homs and Qamishli. The group plans to bring humanitarian aid to Syrians staying in the Bekaa Valley in the nearest future.

DECR Communication Service

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