Patriarch Kirill: Real genocide of Christian population perpetrated before our eyes in Middle East

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, in his remarks during the opening of the Russian Orthodox Church Bishops' Conference on February 2, 2015, stated that Christians continue to be persecuted on a mass scale in several states of the Middle East.

'The continued persecution of Christians in several countries of the world, especially in the Middle East, is a matter of our Church's meticulous attention. Using violent measures, killing Christians for their confession of faith in Christ, extremists seek to physically eliminate Christianity itself, to break the existing interreligious balance', he said in his report to the Bishops' Conference at the Church of Christ the Saviour in Moscow.

'Hundreds of thousands of the faithful have become hostages to the extremely serious situation and have been forced to leave that region. There is a real tragedy taking place before our eyes, a real genocide of the Christian population in the lands from which the Good News spread to the whole world', he added.

According to His Holiness, the scale of this disaster, which has been passed over in silence by most mass media, is to be evaluated as yet.

'The Russian Church, aware of her responsibility in the task of protecting Christians in the Middle East, has given manifold help to the suffering brothers and sisters. Our calls to defend Christians is voiced at various international events and forums', he stressed.

His Holiness noted that the suffering Christians of the Patriarchate of Antioch has been given all possible material support by the Russian Orthodox Church and public organizations.

'Christians in the Middle East see in our Church today and in Russia a defender of their interests. And we should not forget our duty to do all that is possible to preserve the Christian presence in the Middle East', His Holiness said in conclusion.

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