



Regular meeting between Hegumen Arseniy (Sokolov), representative of Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia to Patriarch of Antioch and All the East, and Maronite Patriarch Mar Bechara Boutros al-Rahi takes place in Diman

On 30 July 2014, Hegumen Arseniy (Sokolov), representative of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia to the Patriarch of Antioch and All the East, visited Maronite Patriarch Mar Bechara Boutros al-Rahi in his summer residence in Diman.

In the 16th-17th centuries, in a time of persecution against Christians in the Ottoman Empire, it was the only residence of the Maronite Patriarchs, as it is located in the difficult-to-reach mountainous regions of north Lebanon. At that time many monasteries, sketes and monastic cells were founded in a ravine near Diman. Since then the place has been known as *Wadi Qadisha*, the Holy Valley.

His Beatitude Patriarch Bechara al-Rahi showed Hegumen Arseniy a chapel of the residence and the Patriarchal garden. The Maronite Patriarch and the representative of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia to the Patriarch of Antioch and All the East discussed the political situation in Lebanon, as well as the situation of Christians in the Middle East.

After the meeting with Patriarch Mar Bechara al-Rahi, Hegumen Arseniy visited the Monastery of the Holy Prophet Elisha (Mar Lishaa), founded in Wadi Qadisha in the 14th century, and a cave in which the Maronite hermit Sharbel Mahluf had performed his ascetic labours.