



Primates of the Local Orthodox Churches stress the necessity of the immediate restoration of peace in Syria

The Primates and representatives of the Local Orthodox Churches who gathered at the Phanar (Istanbul) to discuss the preparation to the Pan-Orthodox Council, addressed a message to Orthodox Christians, representatives of other confessions and all people of good will, expressing their support for the martyrdom admiration for the witness of Christians in the Middle East, Africa and other parts of the world.

“We call to mind their dual martyrdom: for their faith as well as for the safeguarding of their historical relationship with people of other religious convictions. We denounce the lack of peace and stability, which is prompting Christians to abandon the land where our Lord Jesus Christ was born and whence the Good News spread to the entire world,” says the Message, which was read out on March 9 during divine service celebrated in the Cathedral of St. George, the residence of the Patriarch of Constantinople at the Phanar.

While extending sympathy to all victims of the tragedy in Syria, the Primates of the Local Orthodox Churches condemned every form of terrorism and defamation of religion and added, ‘the kidnapping of Metropolitans Paul and Youhanna, other clergymen as well as the nuns of St. Thecla Convent in Maaloula remains an open wound, and we demand their immediate liberation.’

Appealing to all involved in the conflict, the Primates asked for immediate cessation of military action, release of captives, and establishment of peace through dialogue.

‘Christians in the Middle East are a leaven of peace. Peace for all people also means peace for Christians,’ the Primates said. They expressed support to the Patriarchate of Antioch in its spiritual and humanitarian ministry, and its efforts for reconstruction and the resettlement of all refugees.