# Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of Orthodoxy's statement on the kidnapping of nuns from St Thecla's Convent in the Syrian town of Maalula

*In connection with the brutal attack carried out by extremists against Syrian Christians, the IAO expressed solidarity with the Christian population in Syria and the Middle East. The statement reads:*

The Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of Orthodoxy with strong indignation and deep concern took the news about a new brutal attack carried out against Christians in Syria by extremist radical Muslim armed groups, in particular, the kidnapping of nuns from the Greek Orthodox Convent of St Thecla at the town of Maalula and their forced removal.

The brutality of this action is aggravated considering the innocence of the nuns, the historicity of the convent and its social service as well as the fact that it happened seven months after the same forces abducted Metropolitan Paul of Aleppo and Metropolitan Mark of the Syrian Jacobite Church.

The Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of Orthodoxy:

- strongly condemns this criminal action;
- expresses deep concern and indignation over the new barbarity;
- reaffirms its full solidarity with Christians in Syria and the Middle East as a whole;
- demands that all parties should respect the places of worship, religious institutions and Christians; and
- calls upon deputy members and governments of the IAO member countries to condemn this action as threatening with disappearance to the Christians present in the vast region of the Middle East and to use all means to set free those who have been kidnapped for the support of the much-suffering Syrian people.

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The Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of Orthodoxy is an inter-parliamentary body whose members are parliamentary delegations from Albania, Armenia, Belarus, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Greece, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Russian Federation, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Ukraine, as well as deputies groups from Australia, USA, Asia and Africa.

The IAO president is S. A. Popov, deputy of the Russian Federation State Duma; the general secretary is A. Nerantzis, Greece.

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