Metropolitan Hilarion: Extremists' actions brought about serious imbalance in centuries-old Christian-Muslim relations in the Syrian land

For many centuries Christians lived in the Syrian land together with Muslims; yet, the invasion of terrorists who at the onset of the war in Syria started to seize cities, towns and villages, brought about a very serious imbalance in these centuries-old relations, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, said during the Church and the World TV-programme on Russia-24 news channel.

As Metropolitan Hilarion pointed out, throughout that darkest period terrorists were cruelly killing Christians or driving them out of their native land. Regrettably, among those directly or indirectly involved were some of the locals from among the Muslim population, and it "undermined to a large extent Christians' trust even in their Muslim neighbours, at least, in some places."

"I was told about it in Syria during my visits," the hierarch added, noting that it will require hard effort now to restore this trust.

In his opinion, "to ensure that Christians can return to their homes and live again in peace and accord

with their Muslim brothers and sisters, it will require a wide-ranging programme of restoration of the housing infrastructure, destroyed churches, monasteries, mosques and other religious buildings, as well as a programme aimed at restoring the trust between Muslims and Christians.”

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