Exhibition opens in Damascus on two monasteries that have suffered in our time in Maaloula and Nikolskoye.



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On 18th October at the National Opera House in Damascus in Syria, the ‘Maaloula – Nikolskoye: the Intertwining of Fates’ exhibition opened. The exposition was dedicated to the Convent of Saint Thecla in Syrian Maaloula and the Saint Nicholas and Saint Basil Monastery in the settlement of Nikolskoye in the Donbass.

In December 2013 Maaloula was seized by gunmen fr om Jabhat al-Nusra (a terrorist organization banned in the Russian Federation). The terrorists killed the local inhabitants and shot at the crosses of the convent. They burnt down the church, desecrated icons and blew up the site wh ere Saint Thecla was buried. Thirteen nuns were taken hostage, along with three novices and the abbess, and they spent more than a hundred days in captivity by the gunmen. The children from the convent’s orphanage were saved and taken to Damascus.

The Saint Nicholas Monastery in the settlement of Nikolskoye in the Donbass was the target of fire by the Ukrainian army from March 2022. Not a single building in the monastery was left whole. Churches were destroyed and crosses were shot off from their cupolas. Among those who died were nuns as well as refugees who had hidden in the monastery. On 13th July old people, refugees and children were evacuated under fire from the monastery almshouse.

The exposition showed photographs from the two monastic houses that had suffered, as well as the damaged icons from the monasteries in Maaloula and Nikolskoye.

The exhibition was organized by the Moscow city government and the all-Russian Boyevoye Bratstvo veterans' organization as part of the conference of Russian and Syrian interdepartmental coordination centres for the return of refugees and the restoration of peace.

Attending the ceremony were the special representative of the Russian president for the regulation of Syrian affairs A.L. Lavrentiev; the special representative of the Russian president for the development of relations with Syria, the Russian ambassador to Syria A.V. Yefimov; the foreign minister of the DNR N.Yu. Nikonorova; cleric of the Convent of Saint Thecla in Maaloula archimandrite Matthew (Rouzik), deputies from the National Assembly of the Syrian Arabic Republic, and members of the interdepartmental delegation **as part of the session of the coordination centres of Russia and Syria for the return of refugees and the restoration of peace in Syria.**

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