



## The Primate of the Russian Church is fervently praying for the Patriarch, bishops, clergy, and flock of the Antiochian Church



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*Archpriest Nikolai Balashov, advisor to the Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus', had spoken with RIA Novosti on the events occurring in Syria:*

Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus' is following the developments in Syria with great attention and concern. The Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church fervently prays for his Brother, Patriarch John of Antioch and All the East, for the bishops, priests, deacons, monastics, and laity of the Antiochian Church, for their peace and safety, and for tranquility on the blessed Syrian land where many saints have labored. We maintain daily contact with the Antiochian Church, including through representatives of the Antiochian Patriarchate in Moscow, Metropolitan Niphon of Philippopolis, and the Moscow Patriarchate in Damascus, Archimandrite Philip, receiving firsthand news thanks to these connections.

We hope that through the efforts of all people of goodwill, with God's help, it will be possible to preserve the Christian heritage and the Christian population of the Middle East. Otherwise, humanity will suffer an irreparable loss.

The Antiochian Church has always taken and continues to take a patriotic stance, sharing both the joys and hardships of its people. Patriarch John X has often stated: we, Christians, are not strangers on Syrian soil; we are its indigenous inhabitants, an integral part of its people's diversity. Furthermore, the Primate of the Antiochian Patriarchate is known for his deep involvement in interreligious dialogue, peacemaking, and social service. I believe that all these qualities are in high demand at this critical juncture in Syria's development.

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