

## His Beatitude Patriarch John of Antioch officiates at memorial service for people killed in Mar Elias Church in Damascus



**DECR Communication Service, 24/06/2025**

On June 23, during the Sunday Liturgy, His Beatitude Patriarch John X of the Great Antioch and All the East celebrated the memorial service for the people killed in the terrorist attack at Mar Elias Church in Damascus.

Attending the service were Patriarch Mor Ignatius Aphrem II of the Syriac Orthodox Church and Melkite Patriarch Youssef I, as well as the following vicars of the Patriarch of Antioch and All the East: Bishop Romanos of Seleucia, chief secretary of the Holy Synod of the Patriarchate of Antioch; Bishop Moussa of Daraya; Bishop John of Sergiopolis; Bishop Moses of Larissa; and Bishop Arsanios of Hierapolis.

Among those in attendance were also Archimandrite Philip (Vasiltsev), representative of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus' to the Patriarch of Antioch and All the East; Damascus churches clergy; and Bishop Armash Nalbandian, Primate of the Armenian Apostolic Church's Diocese of Damascus.

After the service, His Beatitude Patriarch John delivered a brief homily.

Archimandrite Philip (Vasiltsev) expressed deep condolences on behalf of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus' over the tragedy that had occurred in Mar Elias Church.

Among those who attended the memorial service were also Ms Hind Kabawat, Syria's Minister of Social Affairs and Labour, and Mr Emmanuel Kakavelakis, Greek Ambassador to Syria.

Later that day, His Beatitude Patriarch John visited the victims of the attack in a local hospital, **reports** the website of the Damascus Representation of the Moscow Patriarchate.

On June 22, during the Sunday service in Mar Elias Church of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch in Damascus, a suicide bomber opened fire on the parishioners and then detonated himself, killing 22 people and leaving dozens of more injured. According to an initial report by Syria's Ministry of Interior Affairs, the attacker was affiliated with the ISIS (a terrorist organization banned in the territory of the Russian Federation – ed. note).

Following the dreadful terrorist attack in Mar Elias Church, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus' sent **a message of condolences** to His Beatitude Patriarch John X of Antioch. Ms Maria Zakharova, spokeswoman of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, also expressed **condolences**.