



Patriarch John X of Antioch: victims of the terrorist attack in Damascus are “martyrs for faith and homeland”



DECR Communication Service, 25/06/2025

On June 24th, at the Holy Cross Church in Damascus, His Beatitude Patriarch John X of the Great Antioch and All the East **celebrated the funeral service** for the Orthodox Christians who had been killed during the Sunday Liturgy in Mar Elias Church.

Among those who attended the service were Patriarch Youssef I of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church and Patriarch Mar Ignatius Youssef III of the Syriac Catholic Church.

Also in attendance were the following hierarchs of the Orthodox Church of Antioch: Metropolitan Elias of Tyre and Sidon, Metropolitan Nicolas of Hama, Metropolitan Basilio of Akkar, Metropolitan

Athanasius of Lattakia, Metropolitan Efraim of Aleppo, Metropolitan Gregorios of Homs, Metropolitan Antonius of Hauran, Bishop Romanos of Seleucia, Bishop Moussa of Daraya, Bishop John of Sergiopolis, Bishop Moses of Larissa, and Bishop Arsanios of Hierapolis. Praying at the funeral service were also Archimandrite Philip (Vasiltsev), representative of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus' to the Patriarch of the Great Antioch and All the East, and the clergy from Damascus and other Syrian cities.

Among those present were Bishop Armash Nalbandian, Primate of the Armenian Apostolic Church's Diocese of Damascus, and hierarchs of the Syriac Orthodox, Melkite and Armenian Apostolic Churches; as well as Ms Hind Kabawat, Syria's Minister of Social Affairs and Labour; Mr Nazir al-Qadri, Syria's Minister of Education; Mr Emmanuel Kakavelakis, Greek Ambassador to Syria; Mr Michel Al-Tali, head of the Syrian Branch of the Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society; relatives of the victims; and numerous parishioners from various parishes of the Orthodox Church of Antioch.

After the funeral service, His Beatitude Patriarch John delivered a homily, saying: "I have set aside the word I had prepared, for the bodies of our beloved martyrs laid here before us compel me to speak to you from the heart."

The Primate of the Orthodox Church of Antioch expressed his deepest condolences to the families of the victims, saying, "I... ask the Lord Jesus to keep you with His divine Right Hand, to bless you, to comfort you, and to grant you patience and consolation."

He then continued: "I address every Syrian, whether Muslim or Christian, in this country, because what happened is not an isolated incident, nor a personal act, nor an attack on one individual or one family. It is an attack on every Syrian and on all of Syria. It is an attack specifically on the Christian entity. Therefore, I turn to everyone, asking the Lord God to comfort hearts, to strengthen us, and to keep us steadfast in our faith, in our Church, and in our homeland.

"Not all the bodies are laid before us, because some families have already buried their loved ones. Twenty-two martyrs, and more than fifty wounded. Yesterday, after prayer in the church, we **visited the injured and wounded in the hospitals**. We do not forget them, and we pray that the Lord may grant them healing through the power of His Holy Cross.

"What happened is a massacre. I repeat and emphasize: it is a massacre. It is a targeted attack on a fundamental component of our beloved Syria. An attack on every Syrian."

Addressing the President of Syria, Ahmed Al-Sharaa, Patriarch John said: "We will not allow such a heinous crime to become a cause for igniting a national or sectarian strife, God forbid. We stand for national unity and are committed to it along with all Syrians, Muslims and Christians alike. We live

together as one family in this noble country.”

In his homily, Patriarch John called the terrorist attack victims martyrs. “They are martyrs. And I dare say, my dear ones, they are martyrs for both faith and homeland,” he said. The head of the Antiochian Church called upon the country’s government to find those who stood behind the attack and ensure safety for all citizens.

“We pray... for our martyrs, our wounded, and their families. We pray for our country and for the entire world. We pray that the future Syria will be the homeland every Syrian dreams of <...> Our prayers are for our martyrs, and we ask for their prayers from wherever they reside in the Divine Light, on our behalf,” His Beatitude said in conclusion.

Source: <https://mospat.ru/en/news/93361/>