

A letter from Patriarch John X to Patriarch Theophilos of Jerusalem: “Your recent decision has come as a deep disappointment to us”



Balamand, 16 May 2025.

His Beatitude Patriarch John X of Antioch and All the East sent a letter to Patriarch Theophilos III of Jerusalem and All Palestine. The letter included:

“We are overwhelmed with joy as we extend to Your Beatitude our respectful and fraternal embrace in the Lord, and say:

During this holy season of Pascha, we exchange the joyful greeting of the Resurrection and proclaim: Christ is Risen — Truly He is Risen!

We address this letter to you in the sincere hope that it will be received with openness of heart and in a spirit of fraternal understanding, as we record these words as a testimony before history.

It has caused us deep sorrow to learn of the decision taken by your Holy Synod, officially issued and disseminated on May 15, 2025, and published on your Patriarchate’s official website, which stated the following:

“In addition, His Beatitude decided, out of concern for the pastoral and spiritual well-being of the parishioners in Acre, and for the management of spiritual and administrative affairs, to appoint His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Qatar as the Metropolitan of Ptolemais – Acre. And for His Eminence Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba to be appointed as the Archbishop of Qatar.”

We find ourselves compelled, first and foremost and once again, to clarify our position and our right to the Antiochian ecclesiastical jurisdiction over Qatar. Since the onset of this issue in the Spring of 2013, the Church of Antioch has spared no effort in fostering dialogue and seeking reconciliation—both prior to and following the severing of communion with your Patriarchate. It is evident that the recent act of appointing a new Archbishop over Qatar fundamentally undermines all the progress that had been made, even after our revocation of the decision to sever communion and the subsequent restoration of relations to their former state.

During the recent and unjust war on Gaza, we took a historic decision to restore communion with the Church of Jerusalem. This step was taken in a spirit of solidarity with our brethren and in reaffirmation of the brotherhood we share in the Risen Christ, which obliges us to transcend all obstacles in times of tribulation. Our decision to restore ecclesiastical communion was made with the clear understanding that the issue at hand would be further pursued and resolved through mutual agreement. In that same spirit, and out of our sincere commitment to resolve the issue, we made a recent pastoral visit to the Church of Saints Isaac and George in Qatar, where we met with His Eminence Archbishop Makarios and our Antiochian faithful residing there. We recall, in this context, the mediation efforts undertaken through His Eminence Archbishop Christophoros of Amman. These efforts had progressed steadily and, in recent years, had come very close to yielding a viable resolution.

We find ourselves compelled to formally state our position and to express, with sincere regret, that your recent decision has come as a deep disappointment to us. It has disregarded all our hopes, dismissed every good-faith initiative, and undermined all efforts aimed at reconciliation and the bridging of perspectives on this issue.

Once again, Christ is Risen – Truly He is Risen”

[سكذوثرألا مورلل قرشملا رئاسو ةيكاطنأ ةيكريطب Antioch Patriarchate](#)