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Message of Archbishop Makarios of Australia for the 84th Anniversary of the Battle of Crete



With emotion and deep respect, today we honour the anniversary of the heroic Battle of Crete, one of the brightest and most glorious chapters in the modern history of our homeland.

In May 1941, the proud people of Crete—poor in resources but indomitable in spirit—stood tall against the formidable war machine of the Axis powers. Men, women, the elderly, and even children defended their ancestral land with unity and admirable self-sacrifice. In doing so, they proved that the ideals of freedom and dignity do not bow to cold numbers or the logic of military might.

By their side stood brave Australian soldiers, who fought with the same devotion and spirit of self-sacrifice, as if defending their own homeland. The blood shed on Cretan soil nourished the roots of a strong and unshakeable friendship, which continues to bear fruit in the hearts of Greeks and Australians around the world.

At the same time, the participation of the ANZACs gave the Battle of Crete an international dimension, making it a global symbol of the struggle for universal ideals. The fall of the great island did not signal the collapse of the morale of those

striving to halt the Nazi onslaught. On the contrary, other peoples were heartened and inspired by the resolve of the Cretans and their Allies, continuing to resist even where the battles seemed lost.

For us, who look back on these events from a distance of 84 years, the heroes of the Battle of Crete remain enduring examples to emulate and show us how we must face the challenges of our time: without compromising our values and ideals; without hesitating to fight for their defence, even under the most adverse conditions, even if it means sacrificing our personal safety and comfort.

Let us safeguard this precious legacy by passing on the historical truth to younger generations and cultivating in their hearts a respect for the values that inspired our glorious forebears. By honouring the memory of those who have passed, let us contribute to the building of a better future for those yet to come—a future founded on freedom, dignity, and the solidarity of peoples, worthy of the sacrifice of our heroes.

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