

Statement by His Beatitude on the Criminal Attack Targeting Saint Elias Orthodox Church in Damascus



Statement by His Beatitude Theophilos III, Patriarch of Jerusalem, on the Criminal Attack Targeting Saint Elias Orthodox Church in Damascus

Jerusalem, June 22, 2025

With hearts heavy with sorrow and eyes lifted in prayer, we received the grievous news of the heinous attack that desecrated the sacred grounds of the Church of Saint Elias in the Dweila neighborhood of Damascus. The deliberate targeting of the faithful in the house of the Lord, during a moment of reverence and peace, is an affront not only to our Christian brethren in Syria, but to the dignity of all humanity.

Our Lord Himself taught, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted" (Matthew 5:4). Today, we mourn with the families of the innocent whose lives were so cruelly taken, and we place our trust in the divine mercy that

transcends human hatred. This evil act will never extinguish the light of faith kindled in the hearts of the faithful, for as Saint Paul declared, “We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair” (2 Corinthians 4:8).

We stand in unshakable solidarity with our beloved brother in Christ, His Beatitude Patriarch John X Yazigi. May the Lord grant him strength and discernment as he shepherds his flock through this dark hour. The Patriarchate of Jerusalem affirms its unwavering spiritual support for the Patriarchate of Antioch, and joins in prayer for healing, justice, and peace.

In this moment of pain, we call upon all people of good will to renounce violence and to embrace the Gospel’s call for compassion, forgiveness, and sacred human dignity. “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (Romans 12:21).

May the souls of the departed rest in the eternal light of Christ’s resurrection.

Christ is risen! Indeed, He is risen!

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