

Statement of Archbishop Elpidophoros on Terrorist Attack on Greek Orthodox Church of the Prophet Elias (Mar Elias) in Syria



The ongoing tragedy of human existence and the relentless violence in the Middle East has reached into our own community. On June 22, 2025, during Divine Liturgy at the Greek Orthodox Church of the Prophet Elias (Mar Elias), on the outskirts of Damascus, a suicide bomber opened fire before detonating an explosive vest, killing at least 22 faithful and injuring dozens more.

War has become the standard recourse, and we too often become desensitized—only stirred when tragedy speaks our own language. Yet, in Christ, every life is “our own.”

As we lift up in prayer the souls of those who perished in this horrific Mar Elias Church attack, we also remember all who have lost their lives in this intensifying conflict. “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God” (Matthew 5:9). May this sacred promise guide our hearts beyond the boundaries of geography and creed, toward mercy, reconciliation, and true peace.

We are joining our Ecumenical Patriarchate Bartholomew in offering our condolences to His Beatitude Patriarch John X of Antioch.

We also join all voices calling for an end to violence and a restoration of hope. We pray for respite for the grieving, healing for the wounded, and divine courage for those who labor for peace. In solidarity and love, we affirm that every life matters and every prayer is a step toward God’s peace on earth.

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