

Open Letter of the Eastern Christian Bishops on the Assisted Suicide Bill



On Friday 12 September 2025, the House of Lords will hold the Second Reading of the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill. Ahead of this debate, the bishops of the Eastern Christian communities in the United Kingdom – representing over 2.5 million faithful – have issued an historic joint open letter.

Underscoring the gravity of this decisive moment for British culture, the signatories include bishops from communities with longstanding differences from one another. Here, they affirm their shared conviction that every human being is made in the image and likeness of God, and that the dignity of every life is irreplaceable.

The letter points to the troubling experience of other countries where assisted dying has been introduced, noting the rapid erosion of safeguards and the increased risks faced by the elderly, the sick, and the disabled.

The bishops urge the House of Lords to protect life and to stand with those in need of compassion, dignity, and care – not to offer them assisted death.

Read the full letter below.

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As bishops of the Eastern Christian communities of the United Kingdom, representing over 2.5 million faithful, we call on all people of good will and, above all, on Parliament, to recognise the decisive moment this country now faces in the return to Parliament on Friday 12th September of the Assisted Suicide Bill, known as the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill.

This is the moment when the United Kingdom decides whether we hold every human life, every human being, to be valuable, or whether we decide that some lives are not worth living.

Passing this Bill would move limited resources away from striving to offer the best possible care for vulnerable people facing long and painful illnesses, and towards offering ways to end their lives. If we take this step, we fundamentally change our relationship as a society toward human life. We must provide care, not killing.

We already know the effect of similar legislation in other countries. In Canada, only nine years since Medical Assistance In Dying (MAID) was introduced, the requirement for death to be “reasonably foreseeable” has been dropped and, from 2027, assisted suicide will be allowed on grounds of mental illness alone. In Oregon, USA, almost half of those who ended their life by assisted suicide in 2024 reported concern about being a burden on family, friends, or caregivers.

Here, at a time when, in an overstretched NHS, elderly and vulnerable hospital patients can already find themselves facing unexpected ‘Do Not Resuscitate’ orders, even when facing non-terminal conditions, we can be certain that the introduction of legal physician-assisted suicide would result in enormous pressure on the vulnerable and the elderly in our society. The right to die quickly becomes the duty to die.

We call on the members of the House of Lords to reject this tragic and dangerous Bill.

+Nikitas, Archbishop of Thyateira and Great Britain, Ecumenical Patriarchate

+Silouan, Archbishop of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of the British Isles and Ireland

+Matthew, Bishop of Sourozh, Russian Orthodox Church

+Atanasie, Romanian Orthodox Archbishop of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

+Angaelos, Archbishop of London, Papal Legate to the United Kingdom, Coptic Orthodox Church

+Hovakim, Bishop Primate of the Armenian Apostolic Diocese of Great Britain and Ireland

+Abraham Stephanos, Metropolitan, Malankara (Indian) Orthodox Church

+Kenneth Nowakowski OBE, Eparch of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of the Holy Family of London

+Awraham Youkhanis, Bishop of the Diocese of Western Europe, Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East

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