04/03/2020

Archbishop of Athens Ieronymos tours tense border region in NE Greece



The Archbishop of Athens and All Greece, His Beatitude Ieronymos, arrived in the border region of Evros on Wednesday, in a high-profile effort to show the Church's solidarity and support for local residents and security forces.

The border prefecture of Evros lies on the land border with Turkey in the Thrace province, which for the several days has been at the forefront of Europe's attention, as tens of thousands of third country nationals residing in Turkey have assembled on the fence in a bid to illegally enter Greek territory and reach preferred destinations in central and western Europe.

The latest migrant crisis facing Europe comes after Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan made good on his threats to open his country's gates towards Europe for would-be asylum seekers and illegal migrants.

His Beatitude toured several sites in Evros, where he spoke with local residents, military personnel, police and firefighters, expressing his best wishes and blessing to those serving at the border on the Evros River.

The Archbishop was accompanied by four Metropolitans from the northeast Thrace

region.

The visit comes hours after more violence was reported at the Kastanies border post, as mostly young men assembled on the Turkish side of the frontier began tossing tear gas canisters at the Greek side, while others were attempting to light fires on the border fence.

Back in Athens, Greece’s foreign minister briefed representatives of Parliament opposition parties over the tense situation at Greece’s northeast border, which is the external border of the European Union.

In a related development, a rally by Greek-American organizations and groups has been announced for Sunday in the Queens neighbrhood of Astoria, in New York City, in support of eastern Aegean island and Evros residents, who are again at “ground zero” of a resurgent migrant crisis.





