

Eight Years Since the Kidnapping of the Bishops of Aleppo



Beloved Brethren and Spiritual Children

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

On April 22, 2013, same as today, our brothers the Bishops of Aleppo, Metropolitans Paul Yazigi and John Ibrahim, were kidnapped. To this day, their case, a real picture rather than a glimpse of the tragedy lived by the people of this East, remains the scar left by lies in the cheek of truth. Indeed, truth has been slaughtered by deception.

Today we remember these two brothers and fathers, whose kidnapping represents the strangest of cases that have ever violated the essence of humanity.

It seems that, in our world, humans could mean to some people a most trivial object of trade. We remember today our two brothers and fathers who were kidnapped while returning from a humanitarian mission.

We recall those two brothers and fathers who have always been a symbol of the Christian presence in the East. Many voices still like to applause the importance of this presence, but the truth is much different.

We remember all this with a broken heart that has not been mended by time and a period of eight years, nor will be. We set this issue before the local and international public opinion. We bring it forth to remind everyone that we have been knocking on every door from diplomatic to security, to political, social, and

other paths. Until this moment, there is no result in this regard.

As Christians, we are called today to work in unison despite confessional differences. We are called to clean the sedimentary conflicts and remain together while yearning for Christian unity. This kidnapping is the greatest evidence that what unites us before Christ is greater than the sediments of history that separate us.

This kidnapping is evidence that, as Christians, we share a common destiny in this East. We also share this destiny with anyone who seeks God's mercy and sets God as Lord of life and Lord of the resurrection, not putting themselves in His place.

Faced with all this dimming and the fact that the kidnappers neither announced their identity nor their purposes and facing the insufficient efforts of secret intelligence on this issue, we confirm our former statement once more.

As Eastern Christians, we are implanted and rooted in this East as long as there is blood in our veins. We lean on God alone and put on our hope in the Lord of Resurrection. We are here because we lean on the Lord of the Resurrection, who has been with us for two thousand years. We trust and believe that He will be with us forever.

Beloved spiritual children and brothers, we place in your hands this joint statement, hoping that it will be read in the holy churches next Sunday, which is Palm Sunday when we shall welcome the King of Glory who comes into the most holy place of our souls to be risen in and resurrect with Him his beloved humankind.

May God be with you and with us all, as we stand on the threshold of the Holy Passion of Christ that is, nonetheless, mixed with the joy of the Resurrection. We wish that this joy fills your souls so that we all cry out:

"Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death and to those in the tombs He gave life."

Damascus, April 22, 2021

His Beatitude John X

Patriarch of Antioch and All the East of the Greek Orthodox Church

His Holiness Mor Ignatius Aphrem II

Patriarch of Antioch and All the East and Supreme Head of the Universal Syriac Orthodox Church

[Antioch Patriarchate](#)

Saint Joseph the Hesychast

