



PATRIARCHS AND HEADS OF LOCAL CHURCHES IN JERUSALEM

Statement: A Response to the Violence Against Christians in Baghdad

The news of death and destruction visited upon Christians in Baghdad these past days has come to all of us here in Jerusalem. With sad and grieving hearts we continue to witness the ongoing violence which shatters our region. News reports continue to bring more details about the senseless loss of life which has taken place in Baghdad among our brothers and sisters of the Syrian Catholic Church. Priests and members of their congregation, the Church of Our Lady of Deliverance, were held hostage and then killed by religious fundamentalist gunmen even as members of the Iraqi security forces attempted to restore order on Sunday evening, the eve of All Saints' Day in the Catholic tradition.

Our prayers are offered for the souls of the deceased; the healing of the wounded; the restoration of calm and for peace and security for the people of Iraq and throughout our region.

There is no possible explanation which we find acceptable for the killing of innocent people under any circumstances. Iraq has suffered for years and the suffering continues. We condemn violence as a means of change. We embrace all efforts for building bridges of understanding for mutual respect among all faiths.

As the Heads of Churches of Jerusalem, we are committed to proclaim the hope that is in us through the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. The evil human beings can do to one another will not overcome God's love of all whom He has made. This is our hope and this is our conviction.

The Heads of Churches of Jerusalem

- +Patriarch Theophilos III, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate
- +Patriarch Fouad Twal, Latin Patriarchate
- +Patriarch Torkom II Manoogian, Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Patriarchate
- +Fr. Pierbattista Pizzaballa, ofm, Custos of the Holy Land
- +Archbishop Anba Abraham, Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate, Jerusalem
- +Archbishop Swerios Malki Murad, Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate
- +Archbishop Joseph-Jules Zerey, Greek-Melkite-Catholic Patriarchate
- +Archbishop Abouna Matthias, Ethiopian Orthodox Patriarchate
- +Archbishop Paul Sayyah, Maronite Patriarchal Exarchate
- +Bishop Suheil Dawani, Episcopal Church of Jerusalem and the Middle East
- +Bishop Munib Younan, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land
- +Bishop Pierre Malki, Syrian Catholic Patriarchal Exarchate
- +Fr. Rafael Minassian, Armenian Catholic Patriarchal Exarchate

(4 November 2010)