

Antiochean Orthodox Christian Patriarchate of North America

Statement of the Holy Synod of Antioch, October 23, 2023 (excerpt)

As for the public issues, the Fathers reflected on what has happened and is happening in occupied Palestine and what has afflicted and befallen the honorable Palestinian people. The position of the Church of Antioch, expressed by her Patriarchs and Synod since long and until today, is clear, bright, and well-known. It affirms the importance of Jerusalem in the conscience of every Christian and Muslim, and the right of return of the Palestinian people and the establishment of their independent State.

The Church of Antioch condemns the siege imposed today on the Palestinian people and on the Gaza Strip in particular, and strongly denounces the genocide committed there, right before the eyes of the world. The violence that is taking place is the result of violating international laws and resolutions which are intended for the application of justice. It is a continuation of the falsification of the identity of the land and history and an attempt to obliterate the outstanding Palestinian cause.

Therefore, the Synod Fathers offer fervent prayers to the King of Peace and Lord of Mercies, to wipe away every tear from the eyes of the Palestinian people, and to remove all injustice, oppression, homelessness, and displacement. They call on all their children and Antiochian parishes to dedicate next Sunday to praying for justice, and for peace to prevail in the country of peace, and to collect aid for the relief of these afflicted people. Since the current circumstances require intensifying prayer and cooperation, the Holy Synod decided to restore ecclesiastical communion with the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, and to assign a committee in the Patriarchate to communicate with the brothers at the Patriarchate of Jerusalem in order to find a solution to the issue of the ecclesiastical dispute over the jurisdiction of "Qatar" in a way that preserves the right of ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the See of Antioch over it. The Synod also decided to send a church delegation to visit Amman to express the love of the faithful in the Church of Antioch for the faithful in the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, and to stand by them in these difficult fateful circumstances.

The Synod Fathers offered their prayers for the stability of Syria and for the end of terrorism against it. They called for the lifting of the vicious economic blockade. This blockade pushes Syrians to emigrate and creates a wave of displacement that affects neighboring countries, and most especially Lebanon. The Syrian person has the right to live in human dignity. This right makes him firmly anchored in the land where he or she was born. The Fathers also prayed for the unity of the Syrian territory and for Syria in all its religious denominations, which pay the bill of terrorism from the lives of its children, as occurred in the military academy recently where blood was shed. Also, the suffocating siege is creating very difficult economic conditions. Our people in Syria have the right to live in peace and not to have their land as the scene of other people's conflicts and the settling of international accounts.