

PRESS STATEMENT REGARDING THE HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN SYRIA

Athens, January 13, 2014

Almost three years after the outbreak of the civil war in Syria, which has claimed the lives of at least 130,000 of our fellow men and has caused an unprecedented humanitarian crisis, the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece has issued the following declaration :

“We appeal on every organization and agency, on all those in power on earth, to face up to their historical responsibilities to mankind, even at this ultimate moment, and to put an end to this inhuman and absurd ‘theatre of death’ which has been unfolding in Syria since 2011.

Respect for human dignity and life constitutes the greatest universal value and the preservation of these ought to be the highest priority for all.

Three years after the outbreak of the war, which has caused the loss of hundreds of thousands of our fellow men’s lives and has barred almost three million others from any form of humanitarian aid, let an end be put at last to this tragedy. This new year, all of us jointly and each one of us individually from his or her own standpoint, with all the power he or she wields, ought to do what is self-evident, i.e. lovingly to stand by our fellow men who are suffering a harsh ordeal, essentially living hell on earth. In that area of the world, where Christians lose their children, brethren, parents and neighbours; where our fellow men live daily through the agony of death and survival, deprived of even the essentials such as food and water.

Indeed, the cruel persecution of Christians living in that area concerns us and grieves us most deeply. This persecution recalls other, dark periods of history which we all thought were definitively over. Apart from anything else, the kidnapping of the two prelates and the twelve nuns, in particular, constitutes an act of cruel and flagrant violence, undermining any peace-making effort in the area, setting up an environment of restriction on or even outright elimination of any religious freedom and calling the very existence of the Christian element in that country into question.

These gaping wounds in Syria must be healed as soon as possible. The longer international organizations and all parties involved in this tragedy refuse to act in the manner dictated by humanism and reason, the deeper the tragedy in Syria will grow, with unforeseeable implications for the whole of that much-suffering area of the Middle East”.

From the Standing Holy Synod