

# Palestinian archbishop: Christmas celebrations limited to religious services in solidarity with Syria

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Greek Orthodox Archbishop of Sebastia Atallah Hanna said that Christmas and New Year's celebrations will be limited to religious services as a gesture of solidarity with Syria.

In an interview given to SANA on Monday, Archbishop Hanna said that this gesture is motivated by the close ties between the Palestinian and Syrian peoples, saying "how can I be happy during the holiday when I see my brothers the bishops, my sisters the nuns abducted, and the Syrian people deprived of the joy of holidays?"

He said that the war on Syria targets all its components and seeks to destroy its religious coexistence and national unity, voicing confidence in Syria's ability to overcome this ordeal thanks to the wisdom of its leadership, the awareness of its people, and the valiance of the Syrian Army.

Archbishop Hanna stressed that what is happening in Syria has nothing to do with establishing a democratic, civil state nor with people's demands; rather it's a revived colonialist plot.

He asserted that violence is an imported phenomenon and not ingrained in the Syrian people, and that despite the fact that some Syrians may have deviated from the right path, the greater majority of Syrians reject violence, murder and terrorism.✖

The Archbishop reiterated calls for releasing all abductees in Syria, particularly bishops Paul Yazigi and John Ibrahim and the nuns of St. Thecla Convent, affirming that abduction is a barbaric conduct and holding the Turkish government responsible for the safety of the bishops, nuns and all abductees because Turkey is deeply involved in the Syrian crisis.

He also offered condolences and commiserations to all those who lose loved ones in Syria, stressing that terrorist attacks on Syria and its people represent a threat to all of humanity and all civilized values, saying that it's everyone's duty to defend Syria.

On the terrorist attack and massacre in Adra city, the Archbishop denounced this heinous crime, saying that the biggest crime is that Arab Gulf countries are sending money to destroy Syria and that countries that boast about human rights and democracy remain indifferent to the slaughter and violation of human dignity committed by criminals sent to Syria by countries that own money and petrol.

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