Joint Statement by the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Syria
Damascus, November 17, 2026

It is with grave concern and profound indignation that we have followed, and continue to follow, a series of heinous and recurring attacks targeting the Syrian people, and Christians in particular. Time and again, we have raised our voices, and we continue to do so, as this wave of attacks has persisted without interruption. These attacks are not, and have never been, isolated incidents.

What has happened, and continues to happen, in many places, including most recently in Al-Suqaylabiyah, in the form of systematic assaults and kidnappings carried out for exorbitant ransom payments, constitutes a violation of the most basic human rights, as evidenced by the video showing the brutal torture of the jeweler Maher Sankari.

In view of the competent authorities' failure to provide security and protection in response to what has occurred and continues to occur, these attacks have once again escalated in recent days, culminating in the targeting of Archbishop Youhanna Abdo Arbash of the Melkite Greek Catholic Archdiocese of Homs, Hama, Al-Nabk, Yabroud, and their Dependencies. He was bound, blindfolded, and gagged, while his office was ransacked.

The recurrence of these incidents, without any response or tangible results on the part of the authorities, confronts us, and public opinion alike, with a grave question regarding the future of Christians in this country.

We condemn, in the strongest possible terms, what has occurred and continues to unfold. Once again, we raise our voices to demand an end to these attacks, and we call upon the competent authorities to fulfill their responsibilities, conduct the necessary investigations, and communicate their findings to us.

Christians are not to be treated as easy targets for attack or as scapegoats. They will continue to maintain the closest possible relations with their Muslim brothers and sisters, on the basis of full and equal citizenship.

May God protect Syria and preserve within it civil peace, a peace that must be safeguarded above all else.

JOHN X
Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch and All the East

MOR IGNATIUS APHREM II
Syriac Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch and All the East, and Supreme Head of the Universal Syriac Orthodox Church

YOUSSEF I ABSI
Melkite Greek Catholic Patriarch of Antioch and All the East