



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Statement on Abduction of Bishops in Syria

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) -- a coalition of 25 Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant national church groups -- has strongly condemned the kidnappings on April 22 of two Orthodox Bishops near Aleppo, Syria.

The kidnapping of Syriac Metropolitan Orthodox Bishop Yohanna Ibrahim and Greek Orthodox Metropolitan Bishop Paul Yazigi took place in the village of Kfar Dael in northern Syria. Their driver, Fatha'Allah Kabboud, a Syriac Orthodox Deacon, was killed in the kidnapping.

Both Metropolitans are known for their humanitarian work on behalf of Orthodox Christian Charities and for preaching tolerance.

This shameless assault on clergy crosses a new line in the deteriorating situation in Syria, with its rich history of interreligious culture.

CMEP calls for the immediate and unconditional release of these Bishops.

It urges all parties in Syria to respect and protect all those working for humanitarian relief at this very difficult time. CMEP also urges all Syrians to work for a sustainable peace that is inclusive and respects all religious and ethnic groups.

Formed in 1984, [Churches for Middle East Peace](#) is a [coalition of 25 national Church denominations and organizations](#), including Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant traditions. It works to encourage U.S. government policies that actively promote a just, lasting and comprehensive resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, ensuring security, human rights and religious freedom for all people of the region.

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