News 20 November 2026 | English article

Syria's Patriarchs Warn Today of Attacks on Christians

A true story of faith under pressure. Read the first half below, then continue online.

KEY SPIRITUAL TAKEAWAY

"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,"

(Transliterated from the original Hindi.)

They had gathered only to pray. When prayer itself becomes the target, faith is proved not by words but by staying.

The Story - Part One

The leaders of Syria's three oldest Christian churches warned today that attacks, kidnappings and extortion against Christians are escalating - and they accused the authorities of failing to protect them. The joint statement, dated Damascus, 17 November 2026, was reported by Fox News Digital on 19 November.

The warning came with a name and a face. Archbishop Youhanna Abdo Arbash, of the Melkite Greek Catholic Archdiocese of Homs, Hama, Al-Nabk, Yabroud and their Dependencies, was attacked in his own office on 14 November. He was bound, blindfolded and gagged while his office was ransacked. An archbishop - a man whose job is to speak for his people - was silenced in the most literal way possible, in the room where he works.

And there was a second face. Maher Sankari, a jeweler from Suqaylabiyah, was tortured - and the torture was filmed and circulated online, so that everyone in his town could see what happens to a Christian who is taken. The patriarchs named him in their statement. They wanted the world to know his name.

The Patriarchs' Warning: Attacks Are Not Isolated Cases

The statement was signed by all three heads of Syria's oldest churches: John X, Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch and All the East; Ignatius Aphrem II, Syriac Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch and All the East; and Youssef Absi, Melkite Greek Catholic Patriarch of Antioch and All the East. Three churches that have disagreed about much across the centuries agreed about this, and put their names to it together.

"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," the patriarchs wrote. "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."

The Turning Point - What Happens Next

The story reaches a life-changing moment that changes everything -- and what seemed like the end is only the middle. Two reports disagree on the numbers, and one question is left unanswered: will the CCTV footage ever come out? Read the full story to find out what happens next.

PERSONAL REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When gathering to pray carries a real cost, what keeps a community coming together anyway -- and what would keep you coming?

2. The pastor's sister shielded him with her own body and fainted under the blows. What does costly, self-giving love look like in your own family or church?

3. When justice is delayed and a complaint is withdrawn under threat, how do believers hold on to truth without giving in to fear -- or to hatred?

READ THE FULL STORY

Continue on FaithStories -- the complete article, with sources and related stories:
https://faithstories.onrender.com/articles/news-991.html?utm_source=pdf_guide&utm_medium=organic_pdf

More from FaithStories

FaithStories - Home
https://faithstories.onrender.com/

(Spanish) León XIV reunió a 13 millones en su gira por Latinoamérica
https://faithstories.onrender.com/articles/es/news-995.html

(Portuguese) 90 mil fiéis desafiam chuva na procissão do Rocio no Paraná
https://faithstories.onrender.com/articles/pt/news-996.html

(Hindi) Vetikana Kaa Guru Naanaka Sandesha: Iisaaii-sikha Milakara Shaanti Banaaen
https://faithstories.onrender.com/articles/hi/news-997.html