



5/12/2013

STATEMENT

The Interparliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy (**I.A.O.**) was informed with manifest indignation and deep concern about the new brutal attack against Christians of Syria by extremist Muslim paramilitary groups, i.e. the abduction of nuns from the Greek-Orthodox Convent of St. Thekla in Maaloula, Syria, or their forcible displacement therefrom.

The atrocity of this act is further aggravated if one considers the innocence of the nuns, the historical significance of the monastery, the social work it performs, as well as the fact that this act is taking place only seven months after the abduction of Metropolitan Paul of Aleppo of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and Metropolitan Mark Gregory Yohanna Ibrahim of the Jacobite Syrian Church, by the same forces.

The **I.A.O.**:

- **Strongly deplores** this criminal act
- **Expresses** its deep concern and indignation for this new atrocity
- **Professes** its profound solidarity to the Christians of Syria and the whole Middle East
- **Demands** urgent respect for places of worship, religious institutions and the rights of Christians of Syria by everyone
- **Invites** its member parliamentarians, as well as the governments of its member-states, to condemn this act, which threatens to eliminate the presence of Christians in the broader region of the Middle East, and to exhaust every possibility of freeing all those who have been abducted, supporting the suffering people of Syria.

