



PATRIARCHS AND HEADS OF LOCAL CHURCHES OF JERUSALEM

Statement on the Return and Burial of Bibas Family Members 26 February 2025

Last week, Israel received the bodies of Kfir and Ariel Bibas, and their mother Shiri Bibas, who were taken hostage on 7 October 2023. We celebrate their return, as well as moves to reconcile the humanitarian situation in our broken and scarred land. For Shiri, Kfir, and Ariel, we pray that they rest in peace and their memory be a blessing to all who knew them.

As Patriarchs and Heads of Churches, we mourn the loss of life, especially the lives of children and civilians on all sides. Just as our Lord Jesus Christ wept, we also weep and mourn with family members who lost their loved ones.

“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.” Psalm 23:4

As the conflict continues, we earnestly pray for a lasting ceasefire, and we yearn for peace in the Holy Land and our wider region.

We pray and hope that all those who mourn and have lamented the loss of life over the last 17 months, will, in time, find comfort and healing.

Patriarchs and Heads of Churches powerfully reiterate our call for all decision makers here and abroad to ensure a robust and lasting ceasefire. Steps must be taken carefully if our beloved land to inch towards a lasting peace of mutual flourishing. Until the day of peace comes, we solemnly pray and call for the alleviation of suffering for all people involved and entangled in this conflict.

We continue to action the churches of the Holy Land as instruments of peace, and we pray for all those who mourn, and, in particular, the Bibas family in this period of mourning.

The Patriarchs and Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem