

# Religions for Peace

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MEDIA RELEASE  
For Immediate Release

## SYRIAN RELIGIOUS LEADERS CALL FOR RELEASE OF TWO BISHOPS



### At the 9th World Assembly of *Religions for Peace*, Muslim & Christian Leaders Call for Common Action

Syrian religious leaders attending the 9th World Assembly of *Religions for Peace* called for the release of two abducted bishops in Syria. The Assembly, which serves as a venue for conflict transformation, brought more than 600 religious leaders representing all historic faith traditions and every region of the world to restore and build peace. Each Syrian religious leader sent a strong message of support to the abducted bishops, the demand for their release, and the hope for a peaceful resolution.

The two Syrian bishops, Metropolitan Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim, the Syrian Orthodox Archbishop of Aleppo, and Metropolitan Boulos Yazigi, the Greek Orthodox Bishop of Aleppo, were kidnapped on their way to Aleppo on 22 April 2013.

“These two bishops always worked for peace and a good life for all people,” H.E. Sheikh Dr. Mohamed Sohaib al-Chami, an Islamic scholar and a member of the *Religions for Peace* Interreligious Council of Syria, reflected. “They kidnapped our bishops but they also took our soul, our love, and our hope. We remember their big role and work. And we hope that happiness will return to the people of Syria.”

Father Samuel Gümüs, Special Representative of HB Mor Ignatius Zakka I I was, Patriarch of Antioch and All the East, Supreme Head of the Universal Syrian Orthodox Church, called for the immediate release of the two bishops. Father Gümüs implored, “I appeal to conscience, principles, morals and ethics of all peace lovers to spare no effort to bring about a safe and dignified release of bishops Yohanna Ibrahim and Boulos Yazigi.”

Mrs. Asmaa Kiftaro, President of the Syrian Muslim Women’s Forum, shared a message of peace. Ms. Kiftaro declared, “Syria will rise again. The sons of Syria will serve their country. Peace, happiness, and smiles will come back to the people of Syria.”

Throughout the 9th World Assembly of *Religions for Peace*, delegates from different faiths around the world have sent prayers to express concern for those who are suffering in Syria. Plenary III, beginning the Assembly yesterday, opened with a moment of silence for Archbishop Yohanna Ibrahim and Metropolitan Yazigi. Dr. William Vendley, Secretary General of *Religions for Peace*, said, “We stand in solidarity, our hands are in your hands, and we continue to pray.”

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**RELIGIONS FOR PEACE**—the world’s largest and most representative multi-religious coalition—advances common action among the world’s religious communities for peace. *Religions for Peace* works to transform violent conflict, advance human development, promote just and harmonious societies, and protect the earth. The global *Religions for Peace* network comprises a World Council of senior religious leaders from all regions of the world; six regional inter-religious bodies and more than ninety national ones; and the Global Women of Faith Network and Global Interfaith Youth Network.

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