

Press Release

**Twelfth Meeting
of the Heads of Oriental Orthodox Churches in the Middle East**

Atchaneh, June 21st 2018

On June 21st 2018, Heads of the Oriental Orthodox Churches in the Middle East: His Holiness Pope Tawadros II, Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of Saint Mark Episcopate, His Holiness Patriarch Mor Ignatius Aphrem II, Patriarch of Antioch and All the East, and His Holiness Catholicos Aram I of the Great House of Cilicia, held their twelfth meeting at the Syriac Orthodox Patriarchal Residence in Atchaneh, Bikfayya – Lebanon.

The meeting was attended by the members of the standing committee, their Eminences: Anba Bishoy of Damiette, Kafr El-Sheikh, Barary and the Monastery of Saint Demiana, Anba Martirios, bishop the Diocese of Railways, from the Coptic Church; Mor Theophilus Georges Saliba, Archbishop of Mount Lebanon and Tripoli, Mor Clemis Daniel Kourieh, Metropolitan of Beirut, from the Syriac Church; Sebouh Sarkisian, Armenian Orthodox primate of the diocese of Tehran, Nareg Alyemezian, Director of Ecumenical Relations in the Catholicosate, from the Armenian Church.

Their Holinesses started the meeting with prayer; then, His Holiness Patriarch Mor Ignatius Aphrem II gave a welcoming speech, followed by words from their Holinesses Pope Tawadros II and Catholicos Aram I. Their Holinesses congratulated His Holiness Patriarch Mor Igantius Aphrem II for the inauguration of the new Patriarchal Residence in Lebanon.

During their meeting, their Holinesses discussed several issues of common interest, including the presence of Christianity in the Middle East, the situation of the Syriac Orthodox Church in India, the official theological dialogues with the churches, and the work of the subcommittees and signed an official common declaration, covering these issues of common interest, as usual in this meeting.