

**His Holiness Moran Mor Ignatius Aphrem II Karim,
Patriarch of Antioch and All the East, Supreme Head of the Syriac Orthodox
Church,**

Welcome, Our Most Reverend Spiritual Father;

On behalf of all who share in the joy of your visit, both within our homeland and abroad, it is with profound honour that we welcome you among us, in your own home.

You bring with you not only a faith, but also a language, a civilisation, a history, and a heartfelt concern. Your presence here, as the representative of the ancient Church of Antioch which has shaped the soul of these lands with its deep-rooted heritage, fills us with deep joy.

We have not forgotten the pains of migration, the sacrifices endured, nor the perseverance and patience of the past forty years in Turabdin. Yet we know that societies which surrender to despair consume their very essence; a spirit that loses hope also forfeits its future. Therefore, every breath reborn in Turabdin finds meaning not merely in the stones, but in the living stones—the faithful, the children, and the new generations. For true service, in the spirit of the Good Shepherd, lies in upholding the values that sustain us and in breaking the chains of despair.

O Great Father,

Our vision here is to see life flourish again, despite the wounds left by migration, without sinking into darkness. It is for a future where the bells never fall silent, where prayers never cease, and where the light never fades. **We believe that breaking the chains of despair, renewing our spirit, and purifying our thought is the most realistic path forward. For a mind that does not renew**

itself remains captive to the past, and a spirit that does not renew cannot build the future.

We know that whoever loses their land loses everything. If our presence in the East fades, our trace will be erased. Yet the hope blossoming in Turabdin heralds a resurrection consciousness imbued with the love of Christ. However valuable the achievements of the diaspora may be, they cannot restore the honour lost here. Our call is clear: to sustain our existence with dignity, rooted in our own land; to serve the future and the development of our region by constantly renewing both our spirit and our thought.

Your Holiness, Our Patriarch,

From Damascus to Baghdad, from Erbil to Nineveh, from Mardin to Beirut, from Qamishli to Europe and America, you carry with your Cross the living spirit of the autochthonous Syriac culture that has long served the East. **This spirit calls for sincere encouragement and strong efforts for its preservation and growth. For to keep this spirit—one that must never be extinguished—alive, there is a great need for continuous, well-equipped, and purposeful endeavours. We must place not despair but hope at the centre; not passivity but renewal and ownership. Otherwise, it will be impossible to keep alive the language of our culture, the essence of our faith, and the soul of our identity.**

It is our hope that, under your wise leadership, this new era will become a historic opportunity—not only bringing peace and hope to our region, but also inspiring a spiritual and intellectual resurrection. For now is the time to rise above small calculations and to embrace the spirit of hope, renewal, and resurrection.

For Turabdin is a wisdom hidden in the silence of its time-worn stones. Its silence is a profound expectancy; its smile is the herald of renewal. Every return is a

breath for the soul; every investment is not merely a stone upon a stone, but a signature inscribed upon memory and the future.

And the light concealed within the panorama of Turabdin whispers to us:

“Despair is a chain; hope opens the gate of resurrection. A people estranged from its roots is lost; when it returns to them, it is renewed and given life again.”

Barekhamor, With deepest respect,

Yusuf Beğtaş

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Note: This text was written during the pastoral visit of His Holiness the Patriarch to the Tur Abdin region between August 28 and September 5, 2025. This text was originally written in Turkish and was published in Turkish media. This version is a translation of the original Turkish text.