



World Council of Churches

General Secretariat

150 route de Ferney, PO Box 2100
CH-1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland
Phone: +41 22 791 6111 Fax: +41 22 791 0361
Email: infowcc@wcc-coe.org www.oikoumene.org

Direct phone: +41 22 791 6285
Direct e-mail: Beth.Godfrey@wcc-coe.org

H.G. Bishop Armash Hagop
Nalbandian
Diözese der Armenischen Kirche in
Deutschland
Allensteiner Str. 5
Köln
Germany

Email: bishoparmash@gmail.com

Geneva, 16 February 2023

H.G. Bishop Armash Nalbandian
Primate
Armenian Apostolic Church
(Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin)
Diocese of Damascus
Damascus - Syria

Your Grace,

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of life and resurrection.

We have been closely following the dramatic developments on the ground following the devastating earthquake that struck Syria and Turkey. We are deeply saddened by the news that over 40,000 people have lost their lives, and tens of thousands more have been injured and left homeless. For many, this is the second or even third time they have been displaced in their lives. This has left millions of people in a state of shock and despair. Please accept our heartfelt sympathies and solidarity.

Your Grace's prompt call for solidarity with those affected by the disaster, as well as the immediate action taken by the Armenian Apostolic Church (Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin) in providing aid and transforming church facilities into shelters for those who have lost their homes, are beacons of hope in these trying times. Your Grace's resilience and unwavering faith in the face of adversity inspire and encourage us, and we are committed to doing our part in easing the suffering caused by this calamity. Our thoughts and prayers are with Your Grace as you navigate through this challenging period, and we continue to stand in solidarity with Your Grace, now as we have always done in the past. In this context, ACT Alliance has issued an urgent appeal that addresses many immediate needs and the WCC member churches are responding massively to this appeal. As a fellowship of churches, we are "to express the common concern of the churches in the service of human need, the breaking down of barriers between people and the promotion of one human family in justice and peace." (WCC Constitution).

We recognize the profound impact of this disaster, especially as Your Grace continues to grapple with the ongoing challenges of conflict, displacement, and economic hardship. We stand with Your Grace in prayer and support, as Your Grace works to recover and rebuild in the wake of this tragedy. We are confident that Your Grace's Church's diaconal actions will strengthen the historical and human ties between Christians and Muslims in Syria, as well as in the entire region. We learn from Your Grace's courage and steadfastness when Your Grace remains rooted in faith and promotes Christian ethical values in such critical moments.

We pray our Lord Jesus Christ to give Your Grace all the strength and comfort Your Grace needs to support the suffering and vulnerable people, and we are fully confident that Your Grace will emerge from this challenge stronger than ever before. Be assured that the entire ecumenical family holds Your Grace constantly in prayer. This is an imperative of costly solidarity within the one body of Christ.

Yours in our common Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pillay", written in a cursive style.

Rev. Prof. Dr Jerry Pillay
General Secretary
World Council of Churches