

Press Release

**Statements of Patriarch Bechara Al-Rahi Regarding Christians in the Region
a Persistent Adherence to the American and Western Concept of
“Minorities”, Foreign to the People of the Region and to their History!**

(Translated)

In his interview with the Lebanese channel Al-Jadeed in the program “This Is Me” with journalist Samar Abu Khaleel, the statements of Patriarch Bechara Al-Rahi come in conjunction with the visit of Pope Leo XIV to the region, including Lebanon, especially regarding the issue of changing the Syrian regime and his saying: “Christians are leaving Syria today because the state that exists is an Islamic state! Whereas it was not so during the previous regime...” And this position is a confirmation of a previous position by the Patriarch himself; where he said in 2011 during his visit to France under Sarkozy: “Acknowledging that mistakes and condemnable violations occurred in Syria does not negate the fact that President Bashar Al-Assad had begun reforms, and he should have been given a chance”! His view of the Arab Spring was that it is: “an event and development that inspires worry more than comfort, because it is not necessarily an entry to an era of democracy and freedoms but to an era of extremism and more rigid regimes that do not respect freedoms, democracy, nor the rights of (minorities)”! So is this stance by the Patriarch a pre-emptive position to consolidate the Pope’s visit in the direction of what is called protection of (minorities), or a reinforcement of the unjustified fear of Islam — “Islamophobia” — and fear of the establishment of an Islamic state in the region?!

And we in Hizb ut Tahrir / Wilayah Lebanon direct the following messages:

First: What concerns us at the beginning is to affirm that in Islam and in its true state that will soon rise, Allah willing, the second Khilafah Rashidah (Rightly-Guided Caliphate) on the method of Prophethood — there is no existence of what is called (minorities), neither as a concept nor as a reality, in the sense pointed to by the Patriarch or those influenced by Western thought. Rather, what existed within the first Islamic State from among non-Muslims, from when the Prophet (saw) established it until the Khilafah was destroyed in 1924, was that they were under the protection of the State, in its care, covenant, guarantee, and contract — the motto of their status in it being the saying of the Prophet (saw): « مَنْ ظَلَمَ مُعَاهِدًا أَوْ تَنَفَّصَهُ حَقَّهُ وَكَلَّفَهُ فَوْقَ طَاقَتِهِ أَوْ أَخَذَ مِنْهُ شَيْئًا بِغَيْرِ طِيبِ نَفْسٍ فَأَنَا خَصْمُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ », “**Whoever wrongs one with whom a covenant has been made, or diminishes his right, or burdens him beyond his capacity, or takes from him anything without his willing consent — then I will be his opponent on the Day of Resurrection.**” And their supreme model in application is what became known as the Covenant of Omar in the year 15 AH / 638 CE, in which the Khalifah Ar-Rashid (Rightly-Guided Caliph) Omar ibn Al-Khattab — may Allah be pleased with him — granted them safety over their churches and their property. The Covenant of Omar was considered one of the most important documents in the history of Jerusalem. And we refer the Patriarch and those who carry similar views to the words of the writer Gustave Le Bon, who described the entry of Omar ibn Al-Khattab — may Allah be pleased with him — into Jerusalem: “The conduct of the Commander of the Faithful Omar ibn Al-Khattab in the city of Jerusalem reveals to us the great gentleness with which the Arab conquerors treated the defeated peoples — a treatment contradicted entirely by what the Crusaders later committed in Jerusalem centuries later. Omar did not wish to enter the city with more than a small group of his companions, and he requested that Patriarch Sophronius accompany him in visiting all the holy sites. He granted the residents safety, vowed to respect their churches and their property, and prohibited Muslims from performing worship in their sanctuaries.”

Then he continues: “And the conduct of Amr ibn Al-As in Egypt was no less gentle; for he offered the Egyptians complete religious freedom, absolute justice, respect for property, and a fixed annual jizyah not exceeding fifteen francs per person — instead of the heavy taxes of the Byzantine emperors. So the Egyptians accepted willingly and gratefully under these conditions.”

Second: The space here does not suffice to mention the honorable history of Muslims with Christians who lived among them, nor even to list the positions of writers and thinkers who were fair in describing the treatment of Muslims toward Christians — such as Amin Maalouf and Shakib Arslan. Yet we affirm that this Islamic view and the view of its state toward Christians is clear to the Patriarch Al-Rahi specifically — especially after a delegation from Hizb ut Tahrir / Wilayah Lebanon visited him on 12/1/2021 and handed him a detailed book on this matter. Among what came at its conclusion: “Beware — all caution — of the projects driven by the West in Lebanon, especially America, now that the coasts of Lebanon float upon enormous oil and gas wealth — making Lebanon an object of covetousness in its resources after America has drained it politically and socially... And beware as well of participating in the international competition over Lebanon, especially between America and France, as an extension of the conflict over the vast gas wealth in the Eastern Mediterranean... Therefore, it is necessary that your insistence be upon linking Lebanon to its origin, its region, and its surroundings — and upon supporting those who sincerely work to save Lebanon and its region from the claws of Western dependency, whether that West is American, French, or otherwise.” And it also stated: “And today Lebanon lives the same vortex of ‘old-new’ sedition arising from external intervention (American-European) — and if it produces anything new it will only be another failing formula. All these formulas stand upon a law of victor and vanquished — and this entity has been wrapped with a thousand folds of fabrication making of it a holy sanctuary, while it is an entity that has failed to form for itself a unified identity, and its political system is fragile.”

Third: The peace whose propaganda is rising in these days and led by America in a systematic campaign against Lebanon and the region — will not be a solution for Lebanon’s problems. Rather, it is further submission, normalization, and recognition of an occupying usurping entity, and of its control over the blessed land of Palestine — including Al-Quds (Jerusalem) and the Church of Resurrection (Al-Qiyamah)! The approach of peace with the usurping entity is a Western approach serving Western interests — not yours — and entrenches your existence as minorities not as people of the land, having what they have in fairness and owing what they owe in justice.

In conclusion — the project for which Hizb ut Tahrir works is the establishment of the Khilafah Rashidah in the Muslim lands, including Lebanon — a state of justice and guidance on the method of Prophethood. Hizb ut Tahrir has prepared for it its draft constitution, containing the rights and duties of the People of the Book in its work “The Introduction to the Constitution or the Causes Leading to It” — both parts generally, and articles (5, 6, and 7) under General Provisions specifically. This draft constitution is the way to save Lebanon and the region from sectarian and minority-centric polarization — not adherence to the terms, thought, and policies of the colonial West. It is the way to expel the occupier weighing upon the land and the people — not surrender and normalization. Attachment to the West, especially America, and its project is acceptance of its colonization of the region and acceptance of its misleading terminology.

Allah Almighty says: ﴿لَا يَنْهَاكُمُ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَلَمْ يُخْرِجُوكُمْ مِّن دِيَارِكُمْ أَن تَبَرُّوهُمْ وَتُقْسِطُوا إِلَيْهِمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ ۝ إِنَّمَا يَنْهَاكُمُ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ قَاتَلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَأَخْرَجُوكُم مِّن دِيَارِكُمْ وَظَاهَرُوا عَلَىٰ إِخْرَاجِكُمْ أَن تَوَلَّوْهُمْ ۚ وَمَن تَوَلَّوْهُمْ فَهُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ﴾ “Allah does not forbid you from those who do not fight you because of religion and do not expel you from your homes — from being righteous toward them and acting justly toward them. Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly. Allah only forbids you from those who fight you because of religion and expel you from your homes and aid in your expulsion — that you take them as allies. And whoever takes them as allies — then those are the wrongdoers.” [Surah Al-Mumtahanah:8-9].

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