WIRE Orthodox

UNCLASSIFIED // OPEN SOURCE | Saturday, 24 October 2026 (Memorial Saturday; Martyr Arethas and those with him; "Joy of All Who Sorrow" Icon) | Vol. 2026-297 | As of 240730 EDT OCT 26

BLUF. WIRE Orthodox holds at **ENVIRONMENT FOR CRISIS**, with the trend ↑ on violence against Orthodox Christians. On 23 Oct gunmen opened fire during a funeral at the **Greek Orthodox Church of St George in Hmoud, Karak governorate, Jordan**, killing **eight** and wounding about 40, by Jordanian figures reported on 24 Oct; officials call it an extremist terrorist act and the attackers remain at large. The Patriarchate of Jerusalem, whose flock it was, said "we shall not be driven to leave our land." In Egypt, **Archbishop Symeon of Sinai** said on 24 Oct he will sign the government's agreement on **St Catherine's Monastery** once his health allows, with the backing of Constantinople, Jerusalem, Alexandria, Greece and Cyprus. In Rome, **Pope Leo XIV received Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew** on 24 Oct. No Moscow reply to Bartholomew's "heretical ideologies" remark was found. The war between two majority-Orthodox nations continues (WIRE World Instability EU-T1: Potential, =).

0. WIRE Orthodox Dashboard

TOPIC	CRISIS LEVEL	DOM. INDICATOR	KEY DRIVER (today)	TREND
ORTH-T1 Church and state; pressure on Orthodox Christians	ENVIRONMENT FOR CRISIS	SIGNIFICANT	Karak church shooting: 8 killed, ~40 wounded at a Greek Orthodox funeral; attackers at large	↑
ORTH-T4 Orthodoxy and geopolitics	ENVIRONMENT FOR CRISIS	SIGNIFICANT	War between majority-Orthodox nations continues (EU-T1 Potential, =)	=
ORTH-T2 Inter-Orthodox relations / schism	ENVIRONMENT FOR CRISIS	ABNORMAL	No Moscow reply to the Phanar yet; Antioch Synod closes today with no Ukraine text reported	=
ORTH-T3 Holy Land and Ecumenical Patriarchate	NO CRISIS	ROUTINE	Sinai archbishop to sign Egypt agreement; Bartholomew–Leo XIV audience	=
ORTH-T5 Spiritual reading	NOT SCORED	—	Martyr Arethas of Najran; Memorial Saturday	—

Indicator: ROUTINE ABNORMAL SIGNIFICANT EXTREME **Crisis level:** NO CRISIS ENV. FOR CRISIS POTENTIAL PROBABLE IMMINENT

Family level = highest topic level. Roll-up per WIRE_METHOD §1a. This assessment takes no political side; it scores pressure on the Church's freedom, unity and flock.

Level change since 23 Oct: none. Trend change: family ↑ held, now driven by ORTH-T1 (ORTH-T2 back to =).

Moved indicators (vs 23 Oct). ORTH-T1 Middle East Christian security ABNORMAL to **SIGNIFICANT** (killings at a church). With UOC legal status still ABNORMAL, ORTH-T1 rolls up to ENVIRONMENT FOR CRISIS by rule, trend ↑.

I. ORTH-T1 CHURCH AND STATE; PRESSURE ON ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS | ENVIRONMENT FOR CRISIS

Karak, Jordan. On Friday 23 Oct gunmen fired on mourners at a funeral at the Greek Orthodox Church of St George in the village of Hmoud (also spelled Hammoud), about 150 km south of Amman (AP; BBC). At a joint press conference that evening, Interior Minister Mazen Al-Faraya called it a terrorist operation, and Public Security Directorate head Obaidullah Al-Maaytah gave seven killed and 34 injured (Petra, state news agency, 23 Oct). Jordanian media put the toll at **eight** on 24 Oct; the health minister said 27 remain in hospital, two critical (Arab News, 24 Oct; Reuters via Al-Monitor, 24 Oct). Witnesses said 150 to 200 people were present and the firing lasted about five minutes. No group has claimed it, and authorities say it is too early to tie the attackers to any known group (Reuters). King Abdullah II pledged "the harshest retaliation" (Arab News). The US Embassy says security has been raised across Jordan (Reuters). **Church response.** Patriarch Theophilos III, the Holy Synod of Jerusalem and Metropolitan Christophoros of Jordan condemned "this vile, cowardly, and bloody act" and wrote: "We shall remain here as witnesses to the faith" (Jerusalem Patriarchate). The Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem also condemned it (LPJ), and the Holy Synod of Antioch prayed for the victims at Balamand (Orthodox Times, 24 Oct). **Ukraine.** No new court ruling found today.

DESS's own notice confirms the 21 Oct Rovenky Eparchy dissolution (case No. 855/11/26) and that the rest of the claim was refused (DESS notice via Direct Speech, 22 Oct). The UOC's Zaporizhzhia Eparchy, found ROC-affiliated by a DESS order of 13 Oct, asked the faithful for daily prayer at 21:00 over DESS's actions (Zaporizhzhia Eparchy; Interfax-Ukraine). **Indicators.** Middle East Christian security **SIGNIFICANT** (killings at a church). UOC legal status ABNORMAL (carried). Roll-up: 1 Significant + 1 Abnormal = ENVIRONMENT FOR CRISIS (=), trend ↑. No override: the state is protecting the community, and there is no sign of a campaign or displacement. **Analyst Comment.** Reporting calls such attacks very rare in Jordan, which makes this the most serious single act of violence against an Orthodox flock in the region this cycle. The deciding questions are whether a network is behind it and whether copycat attacks follow. The Jordanian state's quick and public stand with the community points away from systemic persecution. It comes as Washington cuts embassy staff in Amman over Iranian threats (WIRE World Instability), but nothing found links the two.

II. ORTH-T2 INTER-ORTHODOX RELATIONS AND THE SCHISM | ENVIRONMENT FOR CRISIS

No Moscow Patriarchate statement answering Bartholomew's 22 Oct remark was found (ORT-04 open). On its fourth day (23 Oct) the Antiochian Holy Synod took up southern Lebanon, vocations, its personal-status rules and digital media; Orthodox Times reported no text on Ukraine or Moscow–Constantinople relations. The session was due to close today, 24 Oct (Orthodox Times, 24 Oct). **Indicators.** Rival jurisdictions ABNORMAL and public polemic ABNORMAL (both carried); breaks in communion ROUTINE. Roll-up: ENVIRONMENT FOR CRISIS (=), trend =.

III. ORTH-T3 HOLY LAND AND THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE | NO CRISIS

Sinai. Archbishop Symeon of Sinai said on 24 Oct he will sign Egypt's draft agreement on St Catherine's Monastery, which follows from the 28 May 2025 Ismailia Court of Appeal ruling. The Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Patriarchates of Jerusalem and Alexandria, and the Churches of Greece and Cyprus backed it. Signing awaits his health, and the date is to be set with the brotherhood and Cairo (Orthodox Times, 24 Oct; Kathimerini, 24 Oct). He said he expects Egypt's Court of Cassation, whose ruling was due 24 Oct, no longer needs to rule; that has not been confirmed (Proto Thema, 24 Oct). **Rome.** The Vatican's audience bulletin lists Bartholomew I among those Pope Leo XIV received on 24 Oct (Holy See Press Office). On 23 Oct he received an honorary doctorate at the Angelicum and spoke on "The Path to Full Communion" (Orthodox Times, 24 Oct; Ecumenical Patriarchate). **Indicators.** ROUTINE (Sinai is moving toward settlement; no new Jerusalem property, Halki or Phanar action). The Karak attack is on the Jerusalem Patriarchate's flock but is scored once, under ORTH-T1. Roll-up: NO CRISIS (=). **Analyst Comment.** The Sinai step is the most hopeful item this week: a compromise reached by consensus across the Greek-speaking Churches, not by a court. Until it is signed it remains reversible.

IV. ORTH-T4 ORTHODOXY AND GEOPOLITICS | ENVIRONMENT FOR CRISIS

WIRE World Instability holds EU-T1 at Potential (=) and reports the first agreed local ceasefire and dated technical talks (see that edition for sources). No new official religious justification of the war was found today. **Indicators.** War between majority-Orthodox nations SIGNIFICANT (standing); religious justification ABNORMAL (carried from 22 Oct). Roll-up: 1 Significant = ENVIRONMENT FOR CRISIS (=).

V. ORTH-T5 SPIRITUAL READING OF THE DAY | NOT SCORED

Spiritual Reflection. This section is not analysis and not evidence. Today is a Memorial Saturday for the departed. The Church also remembers the **Martyr Arethas and those with him**, the Christians of Najran in southern Arabia, killed about 523 when they would not deny Christ (OCA), and the icon of the Mother of God "Joy of All Who Sorrow" (OCA readings). The appointed Epistle (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17) reads: "that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope." On the day after a funeral became a massacre in Karak, the Church prays for the newly departed of Hmoud by name in its memorial services and keeps vigil with those who weep. No newer homily from the Metropolis of Morphou, the Metropolis of Atlanta, the Holy Mountain or the Church of Greece was collected this cycle.

VI. PREDICTIONS

- **Open, no resolution:** ORT-01 (Supreme Court ruling on the Kyiv Metropolis appeal by 30 Nov, 40%), ORT-02 (Moscow statement on the Bulgarian visits by 30 Nov, 25%), ORT-03 (new DESS affiliation finding, 22 Oct–30 Nov, 70%; the Zaporizhzhia order of 13 Oct falls before the window), ORT-04 (Moscow reply to the "heretical ideologies" remark by 15 Nov, 30%), ORT-05 (Antiochian Synod communiqué addresses Ukraine or Moscow–Constantinople by 31 Oct, 25%; nothing reported through day four).
- **New, ORT-06 (logged):** Jordanian authorities announce the arrest, or death during arrest, of at least one perpetrator of the 23 Oct Karak church attack **by 7 Nov 2026**. **80%, likely.**
- **New, ORT-07 (logged):** The agreement between Egypt and St Catherine's Monastery, Sinai, is formally signed **by 31 Dec 2026**. **55%, about even.**

VII. GAPS AND UNVERIFIED

- **Karak:** the toll of eight is from Jordanian media via Arab News and Reuters; the last official briefing seen gave seven. An ISIS claim reported by one outlet (WIRE World Instability) is unconfirmed. Victims' names were not collected.
- **Sinai:** the agreement text is not public; whether the Court of Cassation ruled or postponed on 24 Oct is unconfirmed.
- **Vatican audience:** only the bulletin line was read; no joint statement was found.
- **Antioch:** final communiqué not yet published.
- **Not collected:** clergy detentions, Forum 18 and USCIRF updates, Cyprus/Türkiye property cases, latest homilies.

Sources

AP, BBC, Petra (23 Oct); Arab News, Reuters via Al-Monitor (24 Oct); Jerusalem Patriarchate and Latin Patriarchate statements; Orthodox Times (24 Oct, three items); Kathimerini, Proto Thema (24 Oct); Holy See Press Office bulletin (24 Oct); Ecumenical Patriarchate (23 Oct); DESS notice via Direct Speech (22 Oct); Zaporizhzhia Eparchy (UOC, party source); Interfax-Ukraine; OCA lives of the saints and readings; WIRE World Instability (24 Oct).

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