News



Smoke rises after Israeli strikes in Lebanon, following an escalation between Hezbollah and Israel amid the U.S.-Israeli conflict with Iran, as seen from Marjayoun, Lebanon, March 5, 2026. (OSV News/Reuters/Karamallah Daher)

by OSV News

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March 6, 2026

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The Assembly of Catholic Patriarchs and Bishops in Lebanon issued a statement March 5 in which they called "for an immediate halt to the spiral of violence" currently taking place in the Middle East and urged "a return to constructive dialogue and responsible diplomatic action, grounded in the pursuit of the common good of peoples who long for a peaceful life founded on justice and dignity."

The church leaders expressed "deep concern" over the "escalation of armed conflicts in Lebanon and the Middle East" and over the "grave consequences" that would arise for the region's people if the escalation continues.

The statement was issued following Israeli strikes in Beirut's southern suburbs targeting the Iranian-backed, Shiite militant organization Hezbollah — part of the larger conflict in the Middle East that began Feb. 28 with joint U.S.-Israeli strikes on Iran. The assembly is made up of leaders of the Eastern Catholic Churches for the promotion of peace, dialogue and stability in Lebanon and the Middle East.

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The statement was signed by Armenian Catholic Patriarch Raphaël Bedros XXI Minassian, president of Armenian Caritas, Melkite Greek Catholic Patriarch Youssef Absi of Antioch and all the East, Syrian Catholic Patriarch Ignace Youssef III Younan of Antioch and Maronite Catholic Cardinal Béchara Boutros Raï, patriarch of Antioch and all the East.

Citing Pope Leo XIV's recent plea to choose good over violence, the leaders said, "This clear moral call reminds us that peace is not a secondary or temporary option, but a human duty and a collective responsibility."

"The continuation of this spiral of violence threatens the dignity of the human person, which is a gift from God, and undermines the foundations of justice and stability," the signatories said.

The statement called on governmental leaders in Lebanon to "work toward shielding our country from regional conflicts, safeguarding its internal unity, and strengthening civil peace," while imploring the international community to "exert every possible effort to prevent further escalation and to establish just solutions that safeguard the rights of peoples and protect human dignity, for justice is the sure

path to a firm and lasting peace." It also underscored the importance of welcoming those who may become displaced and to "receive them with the spirit of the Gospel."

Speaking to "our faithful sons and daughters and all people of goodwill," the bishops asked for them to help those in need and to "persevere in fervent prayer for peace."

They meanwhile entrusted affected areas and the world to Divine Providence, "asking God to grant our troubled world a just and lasting peace, to guide hearts toward reconciliation, and to strengthen the steps of our Lebanese people on the paths of fraternity and harmony with a sincere national spirit, through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, Queen of Peace."

This story appears in the **War in Iran** feature series. View the full series.