

## **PATRIARCH THEODOROS HONOURED THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENSE MR. N, HARDALIAS WITH THE CROSS OF THE APOSTLE MARK**

A special honorary distinction was reserved by the Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, Mr. Theodoros to the Deputy Minister of National Defense, Nikos Hardalias, giving him the Cross of the Apostle and Evangelist Mark, expressing in an emotional atmosphere his personal gratitude, but also that of the entire Orthodox Church of Africa, for the efforts he made for humanity against the coronavirus and the many natural disasters that have struck Greece in the last 26 months.

"Expressing my gratitude to Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis and thinking about your own agony, your efforts and the days and nights you stayed awake, with the army and the Fire Brigade, please accept this gift, this honorary distinction", said the Primate of Alexandria characteristically, offering him the Cross of the Apostle Mark.

With Mr. Hardalias dedicating this top honorary distinction "to all these people from the Security Forces, from the Armed Forces, from the Civil Protection, who under the guidance of Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, fought in the difficult situations faced by our country, due to the invisible enemy of the pandemic but also the disasters that were so many in such a short period of time ", as stressed by the Deputy Minister of National Defense, assuring the Primate of the Second Throne Patriarchate that his presence in Alexandria shows the great respect, the full support and the feelings of sincere love for the Patriarchate of Alexandria and its flock by Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, the Greek State and the Greek people as a whole, as well as for the very historic Greek Community of Alexandria which is an integral part of the friendly Egyptian society ".

"The Greek State remains a constant helper and supporter of the Patriarchate of Alexandria for its missionary, social, humanitarian and educational work in very difficult conditions", wishing that the Alexandrian Church remains as a Lighthouse of Hellenism and Orthodoxy and as a bridge of communication of cultures", Mr. Hardalias emphasized characteristically. "The Greek State follows your work with respect and whatever the Patriarchate of Alexandria needs, we will try to be direct and effective."

At the same time, the Deputy Minister of National Defense, who is in Egypt to represent Greece at the large military exhibition in Egypt "EDEX 2021", referred to the joint cooperation between Greece and Egypt.

"We are working for peace with our brothers and partner Egyptians and those who together see the Eastern Mediterranean as a pillar of stability and love," said Mr. Hardalias, offering in turn to the Patriarch of Alexandria soil from three areas that marked with the battles of the Greeks, the history of Greece: Salamis, Thermopylae and Marathon, proving – as he said – that "nothing was given to us. We and Egypt have fought for everything, so that we can live peacefully and so that we can, through our defense diplomacy, without claims, but also with absolute devotion to our sovereign rights, fight and remain ready for war, without any appeasement, without complacency", concluded the Deputy Minister of National Defense.

Present at the reception for the Deputy Minister of National Defense Nikos Hardalias, were the Patriarchal Vicar of Alexandria Metropolitan Narcissus of Naucratis, the Greek Ambassador to Egypt Mr. Nikos Garilides, the Consul General of Greece in Alexandria Mr. Athanasios Kotsionis and the 2nd Vice Chair of the Hellenic Community of Alexandria, Mary Pavlidou.