

# **THE DRUZE COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES AT THE PATRIARCHATE OF JERUSALEM**

On Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> of August 2009, His Beatitude received Dr. Halil Antraous, a Medical doctor from the city of Koufr-Yiasif in North Galilee and member of the Orthodox Church, who is committed to the Patriarchate. Dr. Antraous was accompanied by a team of 10 representatives of the Druze community from an area of the Golan Heights under Syrian rule prior to 1967 and since then under the control of Israel. These Druze residents of the Golan Heights number around 16,000 and are separated from the rest of the Druze of Israel which number around 80,000.

Worldwide the Druze number around 1,500,000. They follow the Muslim religion along with some particular teachings of the Druze faith. The representatives stated, that all people living in Syria are considered as 'Arab Syrians' and not as Muslims, Druze or Christians. An extensive discussion took place on the peacemaking and reconciliatory role of the Patriarchate for the religious co-existence of the peoples in the Holy Land.

**Chief Secretary's Office**

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