

INTERVIEW WITH HIS BEATITUDE CONCERNING THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

During the morning program «*Every day a new day*» broadcast today on the Radio Station of the Church of Greece, the reporters Katerina Houzouri and Kostas Pappas spoke with His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III both about the recent convocation of the Council of Churches of the Middle East and about the current events concerning the uprisings in the Arab world. His Beatitude, questioned about the latest events in the Arab world and on the possibility of a chain reaction of uprisings replied «*The domino effect of uprisings worries us all; however, regarding Jordan I can assure you that what applies to the other countries does not apply to Jordan given that the situation there is completely different. This apprehension does not exist in Jordan, nevertheless this upheaval is being fueled by different situations and that is something that preoccupies everyone*».

Responding to another question with regard to whether these political uprisings can assume another character His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem replied: «*To be frank, it was an unforeseeable situation upon which you hear a variety of opinions and views from various analysts, but the essence is the same, that the situation is unpredictable*».

Finally, following a question regarding the meeting of the Leaders of the Council of the Churches of the Middle East, His Beatitude pointed out that: «*At this moment in time, the Council of Churches of the Middle East, the Orthodox Church with the Patriarchates, and the Church of Cyprus, play a leading role since they have assumed the Presidency and, moreover, Myself as the representative of the Orthodox Church, on behalf of the Orthodox Family, as the President at this*

moment. This Council went through a major crisis for a variety of reasons including the fact that financial support did not exist anymore and also that the Orthodox Patriarchates, for different reasons, ceased to show substantial interest. However, the political situation that has been forming in the region, and all these recent events have required us to become proactive and, thus, we have taken the initiative in re-establishing the Middle East Council of Churches since it is an institution that possesses many capabilities and can convey the problems and the voice of the Christian world in the Middle East».

Excerpts from His Beatitude's interview broadcast on the Radio Station of the Church of Greece.

Chief Secretary's Office.