

# THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS DEFENCE MINISTER VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE

At noon on Tuesday, the 22<sup>nd</sup> of July/4<sup>th</sup> of August 2015, the Honourable Minister of Defence of the Republic of Cyprus, Mr Christophoros Fokaides, in the context of a visit to the State of Israel, visited the Patriarchate. He was accompanied by his associates, Christos Mallikides, Constantinos Fytiris, Vasileios Polemites and Damianos Odysseos. Also present were members of the Embassy of Cyprus to Tel Aviv, the Ambassador, Ms Thessalia Sampou, Mr Michael Fyrillas and Ms Louiza Varakla, and Israel's Military Attaché to Cyprus, Mr Yuval Gerby.

The Honourable Minister and his associates were warmly welcomed by H.B. Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, in the presence of Hagiotaphite Fathers.

In the context of the visit, His Beatitude referred to the harmonious relations between the Churches of Jerusalem and Cyprus, to Hagiotaphite Fathers from Cyprus, and to the newly-established Exarchate of the Patriarchate in Cyprus. He then went on to offer the Minister an icon of Theotokos Jerusalemite, with Jerusalemite eulogias for his associates. The Patriarch also expressed the wish that a fair solution to the Cyprus problem be found during the tenure of Mr Fokaides as Defence Minister, for an independent and united Cyprus, liberated from the division caused by the Turkish military occupation.

Moved, the Minister praised the Patriarchate for its peacemaking and conciliatory work, thanking His Beatitude for welcoming him and for showing an interest in the Cypriot people. Finally, Mr Fokaides asked for the Patriarch's

blessing for his national patriotic work.

**From the Secretariat-General**

<httpv://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L9mHv52vqqU>

