

# **THE PATRIARCHATE OF JERUSALEM PARTICIPATES IN THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE MIDDLE EAST COUNCIL OF CHURCHES, IN CAIRO**

Between Tuesday the 21<sup>st</sup> of October/3<sup>rd</sup> of November and 22<sup>nd</sup> of October/4<sup>th</sup> of November 2015, the Executive Committee of the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) convened in Cairo.

The Executive Committee is the institution that implements the decisions of the MECC.

The Middle East Council of Churches, founded in 1974, has as participants four Christian Churches or "Families", namely: the Greek Orthodox Church that comprises the Patriarchates of Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem and the Church of Cyprus; the Pre-Chalcedonian Church (Armenians, Copts, Syrians); the Roman Catholic and the Protestant Churches.

The Executive Committee was hosted at St Mark Center (Cairo) of the Coptic Church. His Beatitude Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, represented the entire Orthodox Church as President. He was accompanied by the Elder Secretary-General Aristarchos, Archbishop of Constantina.

The Committee discussed such issues as the unchecked situation in the Middle East and the need for the MECC to protect the region's Christian Minorities, i.e. in Syria and Iraq.

The Committee also ratified the minutes of the decisions of the previous Executive Committee, that had convened at the Marriott Hotel near the Dead Sea, and listened to the report of the General Secretary on the sound administrative, financial and communication situation of the MECC, following a

crisis in its midst, as well as on the activities the Council has engaged in from the time of the previous Executive Committee to this day.

In his report, General Secretary f. Michel Jalakh made special reference to the help he had received from Patriarch Theophilos of Jerusalem and from the Office the Patriarchate had established in Amman, ran by Ms Wafa Gousous.

Committee members commented on the report with praises and some negative remarks and objections, to which the General Secretary tried to provide satisfactory answers to the best possible extent.

During the second meeting of the Executive Committee, on the afternoon of Tuesday, the 21<sup>st</sup> of October/3<sup>rd</sup> of November 2015, Patriarch Theophilos addressed participants in English, see link: <https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2015/11/03/17836>

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Remarks on the general secretary's report continued until it was decided that priority should be placed on the decisions and actions the Council owes to take towards the dangerous situation in the countries of the Middle East, where the Christian hypostasis is threatened by extinction. It was correctly pointed out that without Christians in the Middle East there cannot be a Council of Churches in the Middle East, and that members need to seek and fight against the reasons that force Christians to flee the Middle East, namely: insecurity, economic poverty and destitute.

The Executive Committee also looked at the date of the next General Assembly which will convene in Amman, Jordan.

On the conclusion of deliberations, Patriarch Theophilos visited Patriarch Theodoros of the Coptic Church of Egypt. The two heads of Churches exchanged wishes and gifts: Patriarch Theophilos offered an icon of Theotokos, and Patriarch

Theodoros a cross of Coptic art.

**From the Secretariat-General**

