

# THE BRITISH CONSUL GENERAL TO JERUSALEM VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE

On Tuesday, the 25<sup>th</sup> of November/8<sup>th</sup> of December 2015, the British Consul General to Jerusalem, Mr Alastair McPhail, visited the Patriarchate. He was accompanied by two associates of his.

The British Consul General was welcomed by H.B. Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, in the presence of Hagiotaphite Fathers. Mr McPhail wished the Patriarch on the approaching feast of Christmas though, he said, having previously served in Russia, he knows that some Orthodox Churches, the Church of Jerusalem amongst them, celebrate Christmas at a later date, according to the Julian Calendar.

Discussed at the meeting was the position of Christians in the Holy Land, at times endangered because of recently intensified incidents of violence.

The British Consul also inquired about the status quo of the Holy Shrines, to which the Patriarch responded that as a rule it is being observed with a few exceptions, as was the case with the intervention of the Israeli Archaeological Service and the Israeli Police on the Aedicula of the Holy Sepulcher.

Patriarch Theophilos also referred to cases when the Mayor of Jerusalem proclaims property owned by the Patriarchate as a public space i.e. the Hill of St Sion where, over the last three years, the Patriarchate's School, Chapel and Cemetery have suffered arson, break and entry and damage.

In spite of this, His Beatitude said, the Patriarchate promotes dialogue as a means of resolving such problems and only where dialogue fails does it take legal action to protect

is rights over its land and the Holy Shrines.

Extending thanks, Mr McPhail accepted the Patriarch's gifts of love and wished Him a peaceful and blessed Christmas.

**From the Secretariat-General**

<httpv://youtu.be/hHcD7S0vy0o>

