

HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM ADDRESSES THE ISRAELI PRESIDENT ON THE OCCASION OF THE NEW YEAR 2017

At noon of Tuesday, the 14th/27th of December 2016, the Church Leaders of the Holy Land met with the President of the state of Israel, Mr Reuven Rivlin at the Presidential Palace on the occasion of the New Year 2017.

The meeting, established decades ago, takes place on the beginning of every New Year for the cultivation of a climate of collaboration and understanding amongst the Churches of the Holy Land and the State of Israel. This year, the reception was organized with the involvement of the Department of Religious Affairs of the Israeli Ministry of Internal Affairs, represented by Mr Yakub Salame and Mr Cesar Margiye.

During this honorary meeting, the President of Israel, Mr Reuven Rivlin, addressed the Heads of Churches and their entourages.

Extending wishes for a peaceful and just New Year, Mr Rivlin pointed out that during the previous year, collaboration with the Churches of the Holy Land had been very good. Our vision, he said, is the coexistence of adherents to Judaism, Christianity and Islam, the children of Abraham residing on the Holy Land of Jerusalem. Fear, terrorism and death must be removed from us, he said. Like You, Mr Rivlin added, I feel I am a child of Jerusalem, Israel's permanent capital, wherein adherents of all religions live. Israel is not insensitive to the tribulations of its neighbours and of the Palestinians. We ought to cultivate a climate of trust. Peace on earth is everyone's desire. We must protect refugees. We must pray for

peace, the Israeli President said, closing with the Jewish prayer “Let He Who Dwells on High, Bring Peace on Earth”.

The Minister of Development of the Negev and Galilee, Mr Arieh Deri, underlined that 70% of Christians residing on Northern Israel, Galilee, receive aid through financial and moral support and through progress awards.

His Beatitude Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, then spoke on behalf of the Leaders of Churches who attended the reception. The Patriarch’s address, in English, may be reached here: <https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2016/12/27/28720>

From the Secretariat-General

