

# THE MINISTER OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF GREECE VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE

On Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> November 2017, the Minister of Internal Affairs of Greece Mr. Skourletis visited the Patriarchate after venerating the Holy Sepulchre, escorted by a team of his associates, the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos and the Consul Mrs. Katherine Tzima.

His Excellency the Minister and his escort were warmly received by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos and Hagiotaphite Fathers.

In this meeting there was an interesting conversation on the crowds of pilgrims who visit the Holy Land, despite the broadcast by the M.M. unstable political situation, especially in Jerusalem. Likewise, reference was made on the possibilities of easing this problem by the politicians of both States concerned, with the assistance of the Christian Churches of Jerusalem under the lead of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate.

His Beatitude also mentioned the recent problem that concerns the Jerusalem Patriarchate and all Christian Churches, namely the illegal contracts of the Jaffa Gate hotels of the Patriarchate. These contracts undermine the Status Quo of Jerusalem and the rights of the Christians who have always had an entrance to the Old City of Jerusalem through Jaffa Gate.

Interesting was also the conversation on the efforts to demine the East and West banks of the Jordan area and on the peace-making and reconciliatory role of the Patriarchate towards all Governments within its Ecclesiastical jurisdiction, namely Israel, Palestine, Jordan and Qatar.

Finally there was an exchange of gifts appropriate to this visit.

**From Secretariat-General**

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