

# THE VISIT OF THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF GREECE AT THE PATRIARCHATE

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Greece Mr. Nikolaos Dendias, on his one-day trip to Israel, on Sunday afternoon, July 15/28, 2019, visited the Patriarchate escorted by a team of his associates among whom the former Ambassador in Israel Mr. Loukakis and the former Attache' of the Embassy Mr. Gennimatas, with the Ambassador of Greece in Tel-Aviv Mr. Elias Eliadis and the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos.

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

In this meeting His Beatitude honoured Mr. Dendias with the honorary distinction of the Grand Commander of the Order of Knights of the Holy Sepulchre in recognition of his contribution to the nation, to the Church, and especially to the Church of Jerusalem, addressing him as follows;

“Your Excellency Minister of Foreign Affairs of Greece Mr. Nikolaos Dendias,

The Hagiotaphite Brotherhood our Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre and We personally welcome you and your associates in great joy today at the Venerable Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

Your visit within the framework of the political, economic and energy cooperation of Greece with the Eastern Mediterranean states including Israel, is of great importance not only for the security and peace of the region but also for the preservation of the existing political, demographic and religious Status Quo of the Old City of Jerusalem, which has

been recognized by all peoples and all religions without distinction as a Holy and Sacred City.

And we say this, because the Venerable Patriarchate of Jerusalem, known as the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem, is an indisputable factor in the so far undisturbed multi-cultural and multi-religious character of the Holy City.

Needless to say, that the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, which the Divine Providence has appointed for the preservation and ministry of the Shrines of the Sacred History throughout the centuries, continues to remain the guarantor of the Christian character of Jerusalem which is considered the spiritual capital of the world.

In this capacity as the guarantor of the Christian character and indeed of the Christian field of the Old City of Jerusalem, our Patriarchate, representing the pious nation of the Orthodox faithful of Romiosyne but also our nation as a whole, makes an appeal, together with the other Christian Communities and Churches, to His Excellency the Prime Minister of Greece Mr. Kyriakos Mitsotakis and to you personally Mr. Minister, to make every effort to encourage His Excellency Prime Minister Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu, in order to execute a resolution to the matter of our Church properties in Jaffa Gate and prevent the forcible take over, by unlawful means, of the well-known Imperial and Petra hotels by the radical group Ateret Cohanim.

Resting assured of the undivided support of our Respected Greek Government, Mr. Minister we would like you to accept the Honorary Distinction of the Grand Commander of the Order of the Studious Ones, namely of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood.

This is a token of our gratitude to the Greek people and to their Governments and to our Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as to its diplomatic representatives who are present here.

Thank you.”

Emotional, the Minister thanked His Beatitude and committed himself to continue his work for the benefit of the Church and of Hellenism.

His Beatitude moreover offered the Minister and to the members of his team an icon of the Theotokos of Jerusalem and of the Sacred Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre and gave His blessing for the success of his new Governmental mission and the Minister offered His Beatitude a silver souvenir of Mecedonian origin in return.

**From Secretariat-General**