

His Beatitude joins local heads of the churches to discuss WCC proposal

By Heba Hrimat

His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III virtually joined 19 October fellow Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem and representatives of the World Council of Churches to discuss matters related to WCC and their regional office in Jerusalem (JIC).

The meeting, which had to be carried out via Zoom following the general rules and restrictions forced by COVID-19, was mainly attended by Bishop Giacinto-Boulos Marcuzzo from the Latin Patriarchate, Bishop Hosam Naoum from the Episcopal Church, Bishop Ibrahim Azar from the Evangelical Lutheran Church and the interim general secretary of the World Council of Churches Ioan Sauca.

Main points discussed during the meeting were the WCC proposal of restructuring all parts of their work in Jerusalem including their main office here (JIC) and their EAPPI program (Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine and Israel), all that while combining efforts and receiving support from the Heads of the local Churches in Jerusalem.

The matter was much stressed in the past, and His Beatitude thanked WCC for bringing it up just in time for the central committee meeting in early November. Therefore, it was decided with the Heads of the Churches to first discuss the matter between themselves and then provide WCC with the common concerns and interests.

The World Council of Churches (WCC) which is based in Geneva, Switzerland has its own office in Jerusalem under the name JIC (Jerusalem International Center). It provides global volunteers to help and support the local ecumenical and inter-faith relations in the Holy Land. While the EAPPI program (Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine and Israel) is devoted for facilitating and reconciling relations between Palestine and Israel.