

# **HUNGARIAN REPRESENTATIVE VISITS THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM, DISCUSSES HUMANITARIAN EFFORTS IN GAZA**

Jerusalem, November 6, 2023

Her Excellency Mrs Rita Herenescar, the Representative of Hungary in Ramallah, accompanied by her deputy, paid a visit today to the Patriarchate of Jerusalem where she was received by H.B. Theophilos III, the Patriarch of Jerusalem. The meeting emphasized the importance of cooperation to solidify humanitarian efforts in Gaza.

As Hungary's newly appointed representative in Ramallah, H.E. Ms. Herenescar expressed her pleasure by the meeting and extended an invitation to His Beatitude to visit Hungary.

During the meeting, H.E. Ms. Herenescar conveyed her sympathy for the innocent victims of the war in Gaza and the unfortunate casualties of the Monastery of Saint Porphyrios, the Orthodox Cultural Centre, and the Anglican Church hospital. His Beatitude emphasized that various churches had called for an end to the war and prayed for peace and enlightenment among the governing authorities. He added that a special memorial service was held for the war victims at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

Highlighting coexistence between different faiths, His Beatitude mentioned the town of Burkin, where Muslims and Christians live harmoniously around a holy site associated with the therapy of the ten lepers. He underlined Jerusalem's role as a multi-religious, multi-ethnic, and multi-cultural city. This spirit of coexistence, as per the Caliph Omar bin Khattab's agreement with Patriarch Sophronios, also extends to

Gaza and other parts of Palestinian territory.

His Beatitude affirmed that the churches of the Holy Land stand united in their commitment to the values of the Bible, opposition to antisemitism and islamophobia, and work tirelessly for the promotion of peace and coexistence. He also expressed gratitude for Hungary's support in renovating the Sacred Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre a few years ago.

His Beatitude also noted the severe economic challenges facing the region. The absence of pilgrims and tourists on Jerusalem's streets and disrupted communication between Jerusalem and Palestinian Autonomy towns have added to the economic woes as a result of the war on Gaza.

His Beatitude requested that H.E. Ms. Herenescar convey His gratitude to the President of Hungary, whom he had met during his last visit. During that visit, he had admired Saint Stephen's Church and acknowledged the Byzantine architectural influence on Hungarian buildings. He expressed his consideration of the invitation to visit Hungary again when the time is right and extended thanks for the scholarships Hungary provides to students of the congregation.

His Beatitude emphasized His Christian commitment to keeping churches open as sanctuaries for all people in Gaza. Assuring that the Christian faith in the Cross and resurrection of Christ remains unwavering, even in the shadow of hostilities and economic hardships.

**From Secretariat-General**