

CHRISTIAN SPIRITUAL LEADERS UNITE FOR PEACE IN GAZA AT JERUSALEM MEETING

December 18, 2023

Jerusalem, The Holy Land

In a momentous gathering at the Patriarchate of Jerusalem earlier today, the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem convened to address pressing matters relating to the war in Gaza and the holiday season. The meeting commenced with a heartfelt prayer, underscoring the spiritual significance of the assembly. His Beatitude Theophilos III, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, extended gratitude for the esteemed participants, acknowledging the importance of collective wisdom.

One of the focal points of discussion was the crafting and endorsement of a unified Christmas message. The Heads of Churches dedicated time to formulate a message that embodies hope, peace, and spiritual unity, intending to convey a shared voice during the forthcoming Christmas season.

A pivotal decision emerged as the leaders resolved to meet collectively with the President of Israel. Their objective is to earnestly reiterate their plea for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and advocate for the restoration of peace amid the tumultuous situation.

Acknowledging the sombre reality of the escalating civilian casualties in Gaza, the Heads of Churches reached a consensus to maintain the tradition of seasonal visits in a more subdued manner. This adjustment reflects the churches' stance to temper celebratory activities while mourning the profound losses endured during these challenging times.

The celebration of Christmas in Bethlehem and the revered procession of the Heads of Churches, along with the faithful, to the Church of the Nativity were discussed with great reverence. A notable point raised was the request to the Israeli government to permit the entrance of Heads of Churches, Priests, and laity through the checkpoint at Rachel's Tomb. The leaders reiterated their commitment to celebrating the festive occasion with modesty, demonstrating solidarity with those affected by the ravages of war.

This gathering of spiritual leaders not only emphasized the spiritual significance of the season but also showcased a profound commitment to advocating for peace, underscoring the gravity of the humanitarian crisis unfolding in Gaza.

From Secretariat-General