

# **JERUSALEM HEADS OF CHURCHES JOIN THEIR VOICES WITH KING OF JORDAN FOR THE NECESSITY OF A CEASEFIRE AND ENDING THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE**

His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III, along with His Excellency Sheikh Azzam Al-Khatib the Head of the Muslim Waqf, led a delegation of Jerusalem and Jordan religious leaders in a meeting with His Majesty King Abdulla II of Jordan at the Al-Husseiniya Palace, yesterday, Wednesday.

In the meeting, His Majesty affirmed the position of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan expressing their firm and clear stance towards the Palestinian issue and the aggression against the people of the Gaza Strip as well as stressing that “there is no retreat from the Kingdom’s positions on the necessity of standing united” in defending the Islamic and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem.

In this context, His Majesty expressed his rejection and condemnation of the military targeting of places of worship, including mosques and churches in Gaza, noting that there are vast numbers of civilians who have sought refuge there for protection, and they need assistance that Jordan seeks to deliver in every way possible. He also warned of the seriousness of the repercussions of the catastrophic humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip because of the Israeli military assault.

For his part, Patriarch Theophilos praised the Hashemite Custodianship of the Islamic and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem, as well as His Majesty’s continued efforts to

preserve the existing historical and legal Status Quo in the Holy City. His Beatitude further stressed the importance of protecting the historical coexistence between Muslims and Christians in the Holy Land, pointing out the great progress in the second phase of the comprehensive restoration project for the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, within the Hashemite reconstruction of Christian sanctities.

Regarding the humanitarian crisis that continues to deepen on a daily basis in Gaza, His Beatitude stressed that the Heads of Churches in the Holy Land are calling for an immediate ceasefire to mitigate the effects of the deteriorating humanitarian catastrophe in the Strip and ensure the delivery of vital aid to innocent people who today lack the most basic necessities of life.

Patriarch Theophilos also called for ending the cycle of violence and building on the common values and aspirations among peoples, to reach a future in which the Palestinian people live in dignity like other peoples of the world.

With the advent of the glorious Christmas season, His Majesty warned against restrictions on Christians in the Holy Land during the Christmas services in Bethlehem, stressing that Jordan will make efforts with the international community to enable them to carry out their prayers with the freedom and dignity that the community deserves.

The meeting was attended by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hussein bin Abdullah, and His Royal Highness Prince Ghazi bin Mohammed, Chief Advisor to His Majesty the King for Religious and Cultural Affairs and His Majesty's Personal Envoy. The delegation also included His Beatitude's Card. Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, who in his address to His Majesty said that: we, with you, seek by all means to encourage the world and society. The international community calls for an immediate halt to the war. It is certain that the intervention of the international community will be necessary

to help create a new and realistic perspective for the future of Gaza and the Palestinians. This perspective cannot be achieved without the central role of Jordan and His Majesty. For his part, the Director General of the Endowments, Sheikh Muhammad Azzam Al-Khatib, addressed His Majesty, saying, "You are the custodians of the Islamic and Christian sanctities, and you have proven to all that you are protectors of the nation. Your positions are characterized by clarity, firmness, and consistency in your concern for its interests and Islamic and Christian sanctities, and you considered that to be red lines that cannot be crossed."

In addition, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign and Expatriate Affairs, Ayman Al-Safadi, said that Jordan submitted a comprehensive plea to the International Court of Justice that dealt with what is happening in Jerusalem, including attempts to violate the historical and legal Status Quo in Islamic and Christian holy sites, and attempts to displace Palestinian Jerusalemites from their homes.

### **From Secretariat-General**



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