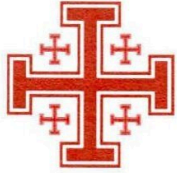


**PATRIARCHS AND CHURCH LEADERS
STATEMENT REGARDING MEETING
WITH HERZOG**



PATRIARCHS AND HEADS OF LOCAL CHURCHES OF JERUSALEM

Press Release: Patriarchs and Church Leaders in Jerusalem Issue Clarification Regarding Meeting with Herzog

**Jerusalem
23-12-2023**

Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem have issued a clarification statement regarding their recent meeting with Israeli President Isaac Herzog two days ago. The statement emphasized that the meeting was not a mere exchange of Holiday Season pleasantries but aimed at conveying the global ecclesiastical stance, demanding, on behalf of Christians worldwide, an immediate cessation of the bloodshed in Gaza. Additionally, it addressed the plight of civilians, the restrictions on movement imposed in the West Bank, especially those around Bethlehem during the holiday season.

The Patriarchs and Heads of Churches highlighted that they promptly issued a statement upon the conclusion of the meeting with President Herzog to outline its objectives and proceedings. However, certain Israeli media outlets, driven by political motivations, chose to focus on marginal aspects of the meeting, neglecting the core of the meeting and the unified statement released by the Church Leaders on the matter. Unfortunately, some social media influencers adopted the distorted narrative presented by these Israeli media outlets, leading to a complete misrepresentation of the meeting and its goals.

The Patriarchs and Heads of Churches reiterated that their consistent message since the beginning of the war on Gaza is: an immediate and permanent humanitarian ceasefire, the protection of civilians, and the safeguarding of institutions providing services to them. They emphasized that this stance was at the core of the meeting, and anything discussed outside this framework aims to tarnish the image of the Christians and the Churches, serving political agendas that the churches abstain from engaging in or addressing.

+++ Patriarchs and Heads of Churches of Jerusalem