

MEETING OF THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE COUNCIL OF RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS OF THE HOLY LAND.

On Monday, the 7th / 20th of September 2010, a meeting of the representatives of the Council of Religious Institutions of the Holy Land took place at the American Colony Hotel in East Jerusalem.

As it is known, this Council was created in 2005 and those participating are the Heads of the Christian Churches in the Holy Land, representatives of the Jewish Rabbinate of Israel as well as the Islamic representatives from the Palestinian Authority. The goal and purpose of this Council is the creation of an atmosphere of religious coexistence in the Holy Land and a contribution towards the solution of the political problem between Israelis and Palestinians and towards the maintenance of the religious status quo of Jerusalem.

At that meeting, on Monday, the 7th / 20th of September 2010, the following participated: from the Patriarchate of Jerusalem His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III and the Elder Chief Secretary His Eminence Aristarchos Archbishop of Constantina; from the Armenians the Archbishop His Eminence Aris Servanian; from the Anglican Church in Jerusalem the Archbishop His Eminence Souhel Dawani; from the Roman Catholic Church, father Mandros Peter and the former Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem His Eminence Michel Sabah; from the Rabbinate, Rabbi David Rozen and the General Secretary of the Chief Rabbinate Mr. Odet Weiner; and finally, representing the

Islamic Faith Mr. Salah Zouhaika.

During this meeting a briefing took place given by the General Secretary of the Council Mr. Trond Bakkeviq regarding all the pacification activities of the Council. A particular update was made regarding the progress of work done towards the preparation of school handbooks for each religious and/or ethnic entity, Israeli and Palestinian, reflecting scientific objectivity without any religious or ethnic prejudice or bias, so that they would support the creation of a tolerant and conciliatory climate which is the prerequisite for the religious and/or ethnic coexistence in Jerusalem primarily and in the Holy Land in general.

The discussion of a topic that was on the Council Agenda, that of the excavations, was postponed for a more appropriate time and after more extensive preparation by the Council due to its sensitivity with regard to religious places.

Furthermore the topic of the Council's participation in the ongoing negotiations regarding the political problem was discussed. Regarding the process and the extent of this participation in these negotiations no answer was given because the method of participation is not known. Certainly, this participation will not have a political character, but an ancillary one with regard to religious topics and other topics that preoccupy the Religious Communities.

The next meeting for all participants in this session of the Council was set for the 2nd of December 2010.

Chief Secretary's Office.