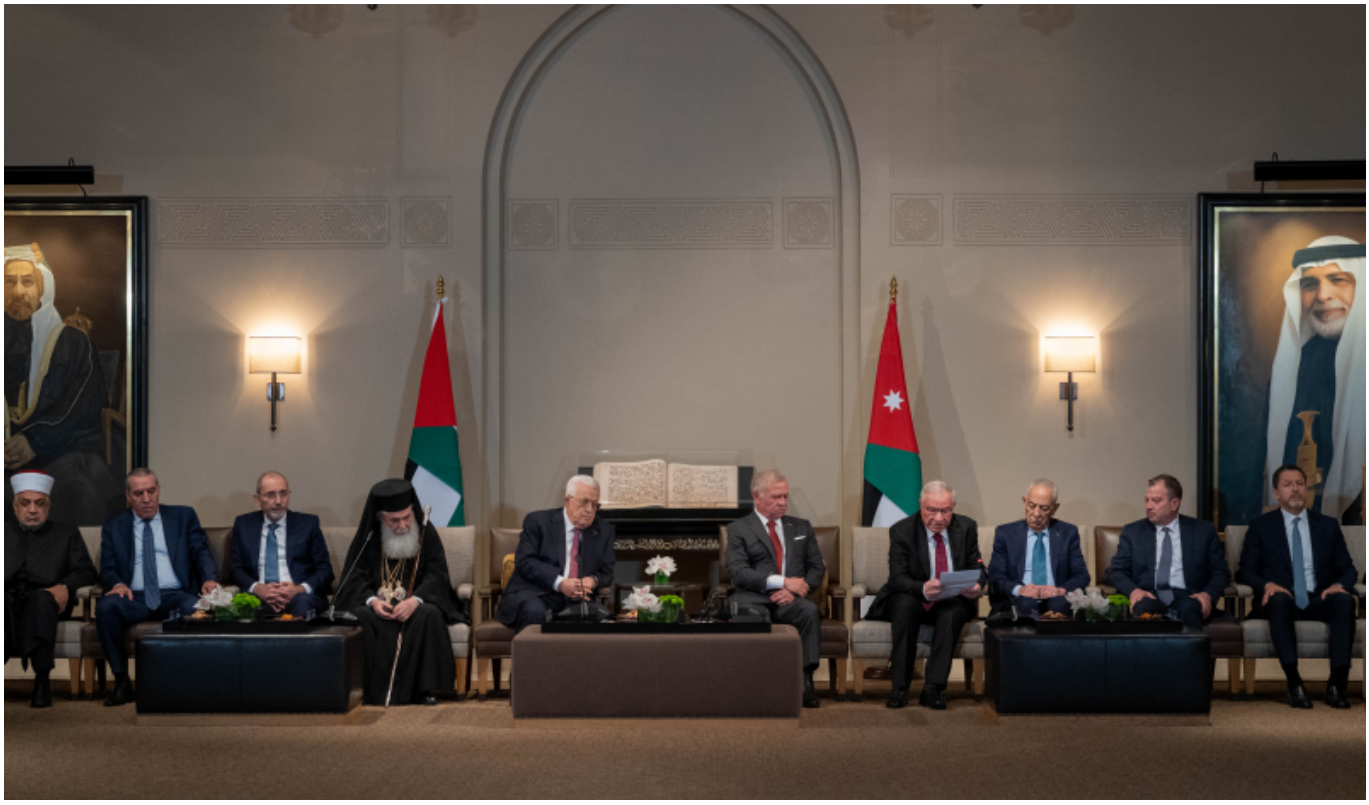
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His Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan received representatives of the Jerusalem awqaf, Church leaders, Jerusalemites, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas



His Majesty King Abdullah II on Tuesday received representatives of the Jerusalem awqaf, church leaders, Jerusalemites, as well as Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas at Al Husseiniya Palace.

During the meeting, a number of attendees spoke about Jordan’s vital role, under the leadership of His Majesty, in supporting Palestinians, and the importance of the Hashemite Custodianship of Muslim and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem.

Jerusalem Waqf and Al Aqsa Mosque Affairs Director Sheikh Mohammad Azzam Al Khatib praised the King’s staunch position in defending the rights of the nation and of Palestinians, highlighting His Majesty’s continuous support for the Palestinian state and his rejection of displacement and resettlement in any form.

Khatib also expressed appreciation for the King’s call to rebuild Gaza and cease hostilities, as well as his efforts to alleviate the suffering of Gazans through the

provision of relief and medical aid.

Through the support and guidance of His Majesty, noted Khatib, the Jerusalem Waqf and Al Aqsa Mosque Affairs Department has been able to complete a number of Hashemite restoration projects.

For his part, Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III spoke about the importance of His Majesty's role as the Hashemite Custodian of Muslim and Christian holy places in Jerusalem, adding that it is a great political and historical responsibility, and a trust with spiritual and cultural dimensions that protects the very fabric of the Holy Land and preserves its unique character.

He warned that the Christian presence in the Holy Land is facing serious challenges due to organised attacks by Israeli extremists to illegitimately acquire and occupy properties historically held by Christians in sensitive locations, in a systematic attempt to change the demographic and spiritual character of Jerusalem and the rest of the Holy Land.

Patriarch Theophilos III also warned against the growing threat of Christian Zionism, noting that it is a fundamentalist movement that misinterprets and misuses the Christian message for political ends.

He highlighted the increasing attempts to impose restrictions on freedom of worship and access to holy sites, and the continued threat of subjecting church properties to Israeli municipal taxation.

Meanwhile, Jerusalem Grand Mufti Sheikh Mohammad Hussein thanked Jordan and His Majesty for the role of the Hashemite Custodianship, expressing appreciation of the Kingdom's support for Palestinians' steadfastness against attempts at displacement.

For his part, General Vicar and Patriarchal Vicar for Jerusalem and Palestine William Shomali thanked the King for his humanitarian stance and support to Palestinians.

He also stressed that the Catholic Church does not accept the canonisation of Palestine in the name of the Jewish people based on the Torah, as claimed by Christian Zionism in the United States, noting that the Torah was revealed to support the poor and the oppressed, worship God, and establish justice and peace on earth.

Shomali praised Royal support to Palestinian students, noting the launch, under Royal directives, of an online Palestinian-curriculum educational platform by the

World Islamic Sciences and Education University that has seen over one million registrations to date by Palestinian students, half of whom are in Gaza.

He reiterated that the people of Palestine do not accept an alternative homeland.

For his part, Mustafa Abu Sway, the Ghazali Chair professor at Al Quds University, emphasised that Palestinians are heartened by His Majesty's determination that Palestinians remain on their land, and his rejection of displacement.

He also expressed Palestinians' pride in the King and highlighted that the Hashemite Custodianship is an international legal responsibility and an extension of the Pact of Omar—in reference to the treaty by Omar ibn al Khattab, one of Prophet Muhammad's companions and the second caliph, which protected the rights of Christian worshippers in Jerusalem.

His Majesty also hosted an iftar for the attendees.

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