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Patriarch Theophilos III Urges Diplomatic Corps to Defend Freedom of Worship and Human Dignity in Jerusalem



His Beatitude Theophilos III, Patriarch of Jerusalem, together with the Council of Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem, today received Consuls General and members of the diplomatic corps at the headquarters of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem. During the meeting, His Beatitude addressed the urgent moral responsibilities confronting the land and its people.

In his welcoming address, His Beatitude spoke of the heavy human cost borne across the Holy Land, with particular reference to Gaza, where destruction and deprivation continue to weigh upon the innocent . He recalled a pastoral visit to Gaza alongside Patriarch Pierbattista Pizzaballa and praised the steadfast witness of Christian communities who persist in service and compassion amid suffering . He also underscored the importance of sustained international engagement that supports rebuilding and interfaith responsibility.

“The Church cannot turn its face away from human pain,” His Beatitude said. “Our Lord teaches us that whatever we do for the least among us, we do for Him. This truth guides our presence and our duty in this land.”

His Beatitude further warned of escalating settler attacks across the West Bank, citing assaults affecting Christian communities in Taybeh and Birzeit and expressing concern over settlement expansion near Beit Sahour, one of the largest remaining Christian towns in the West Bank.

Patriarch Theophilos III raised grave concerns over restrictions on freedom of worship in Jerusalem, including limitations imposed during the Holy Fire celebrations and Holy Week, stressing that access to the holy places is a sacred right rooted in centuries of faith and Status Quo. He referred to severe constraints on permitted worshippers, the disruption of the Scouts’ customary participation, and aggressive policing as unacceptable violations of freedom of worship and human dignity.

He also renewed the Church’s call for humanitarian access to allow children with cancer from Gaza to reach Augusta Victoria Hospital in Jerusalem for life saving care , and highlighted the urgent need to resolve permit obstacles facing teachers and essential staff, which disrupt education and livelihoods.

“Our mission is healing,” he said. “To heal bodies, to heal spirits, and to safeguard the dignity God has bestowed upon every human being.”

He concluded by reminding the diplomatic corps in Jerusalem that blessed are the peacemakers, affirming that justice, mercy, and faithful courage remain the only path worthy of the Holy City of Jerusalem.



















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