

Archbishop Elpidophoros meets with Assistant Secretary Riley Barnes



WASHINGTON, D.C — At the invitation of Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor Riley Barnes, His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America visited the U.S. Department of State for a substantive and constructive meeting on issues of mutual concern.

There was a warm discussion on the protection and advancement of religious freedom, the longstanding efforts and very hopeful advancements in securing the reopening of the historic Theological School of Halki, and the importance of safeguarding the rights and institutions of religious communities throughout the world. His Eminence underscored the significance of Halki not only for the Ecumenical Patriarchate and global Orthodoxy, but also as an enduring matter of religious liberty and human rights.

The Archbishop and Assistant Secretary Barnes also discussed the situation facing Christians in the Middle East and the importance of ensuring the protection, security, and religious freedom of the region's historic Christian communities. Their

discussion emphasized the need to preserve the Christian presence in the lands where Christianity has flourished since apostolic times and to safeguard the ability of these communities to live, worship, and serve freely and in peace.

His Eminence expressed his appreciation to Assistant Secretary Barnes for the invitation and for the United States Government's continued attention to matters affecting the Ecumenical Patriarchate and religious freedom more broadly. The meeting concluded with a mutual commitment to continued dialogue and closer engagement, as well as to identifying concrete opportunities for cooperation on matters of shared concern.

- By Orthodox Observer

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