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## **Archbishop Ieronymos: Clergymen in Greece are not civil servants**



The Archbishop of Athens and All Greece, His Beatitude Ieronymos, on Thursday again touched on the sensitive issue of Church-state relations in the predominately Orthodox Christian nation of 11 million, especially in light of the outgoing government recent attempts to promote a so-called “religious neutrality” in the country.

The Primate of the Church of Greece also referred to the issue of ecclesiastical property and the payroll regime for clergymen, speaking at the Athens presentation of a book by author Nikos Tombros, entitled “Monasticism and the newly established Greek State”.

“We were witnesses to a misunderstanding in a dialogue between the Church and the state. It is too soon to search out and see what went wrong. Time will tell. In the dialogue, there was a reference to a proposal, and this was conveyed as an ‘agreement’. A proposal is one thing, and an agreement is another,” the Archbishop emphasized.

Referring to the issue of clergymen’s payroll status, which is allocated by the state,

Ieronymos noted that “the clergy are not civil servants. They cannot be, in essence, and in a legal sense be civil servants.”