

Archbishop Ieronymos: ‘Misunderstanding’ plagued ill-fated dialogue between Church and outgoing govt



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

Ieronymos broke his silence some two weeks before a general election will be held in Greece, and as numerous candidates continue to pass through the Archdiocese’s doors to receive his blessing.

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”.

Ieronymos said “...We were witnesses to a misunderstanding in the dialogue between the Church and the state. It is too soon to search out and see what went

wrong. Time will tell. In this dialogue, there was a reference to a proposal, but this was conveyed as an 'agreement'. A proposal is one thing, and an agreement is another," he emphasized.

Referring to the issue of clergymen's payroll status, which is managed by the Greek state, Ieronymos noted that "...the clergy are not civil servants. They cannot be, in essence, and in a legal sense be civil servants."